ERN RAMPE

THE CANADIAN COUNCIL ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
LE CONSEIL CANADIEN DE DÉVELOPPEMENT SOCIAL

POLICY CONCEPTS

THE COOPERS & LYBRAND CONSULTING GROUP

Employability Resources Network

The Employability Resources Network (ERN) is a three-year demonstration project funded by Employment and Immigration Canada under the Innovations program.

ERN is the responsibility of three organizations: The Canadian Council on Social Development, The Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group, and The Norton Group.

ERN's purpose is to explore and evaluate methods for helping unemployed people get off social assistance and back into the job market, through employability programs currently under way across Canada.

ERN will select at least 10 to 15 demonstration projects for an in-depth evaluation of the different approaches used to help social assistance recipients and others re-enter the labour force. It will assess the projects' effectiveness for different groups, such as older unemployed workers, women, native people, disabled persons, visible minorities and youth.

ERN will establish a standardized framework for evaluating employability enhancement projects. The framework will provide useful information not only for government policy-makers, but also for business, social service and employment agencies, and program administrators.

ERN will develop an information resource centre. It will include an inventory of national and international employment projects, an evalution data base and a documentation library. A communications network will serve organizations and individuals in the employment enhancement field.

The Employability Resources Network,
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Strategic Management Committee: Keith Norton, The Norton Group; Terrance Hunsley, CCSD; J.P. Herzog, Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group
Contract Administration/Technical Support: Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group (613) 237-3702
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Information Resources: CCSD
Demonstration Evaluation: Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group
Quebec Liaison: CCSD (514) 288-1687

Ressources pour l'amélioration des possibilités d'emploi

Le projet Ressources pour l'amélioration des possibilités d'emploi (RAMPE) est un projet témoin d'une durée de trois ans financé par Emploi et Immigration Canada dans le cadre du programme Innovations.

Trois organisations assument la responsabilité de RAMPE : le Conseil canadien de Développement social, Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group et Le Norton Group.

Le mandat de RAMPE est d'explorer et d'évaluer, dans le cadre de programmes d'amélioration des possibilités d'emploi ayant cours dans l'ensemble du Canada, différentes formules pouvant aider les chômeurs à se soustraire à l'aide sociale et à réintégrer le marché du travail.

RAMPE sélectionnera dix à quinze projets témoins pour évaluer minutieusement les différentes stratégies favorisant la réinsertion des assistés sociaux et d'autres personnes sur le marché du travail. Il appréciera l'efficacité des projets visant différents groupes tels que les chômeurs d'un certain âge, les femmes, les autochtones, les handicapés, les minorités visibles et les jeunes.

RAMPE élaborera un schéma d'évaluation destiné aux projets d'amélioration des débouchés. Ce schéma fournira des renseignements utiles non seulement aux décideurs politiques du gouvernement, mais aussi aux entreprises, aux organismes de services sociaux et d'emploi, et aux administrateurs de programmes.

RAMPE créera également un centre national de documentation. Celui-ci comprendra l'inventaire des programmes d'amélioration des perspectives d'emploi mis en place au Canada et à l'étranger, une base de données sur l'évaluation et un centre de documentation. Un réseau de communication sera à la disposition des organismes et des particuliers qui s'occupent de l'amélioration des perspectives d'emploi.

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Évaluation des projets témoins: Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group
Liaison au Québec: CCDS (514) 288-1687

EVALUATION OF THE YOUTH BUSINESS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE, INC.

EMPLOYABILITY RESOURCES NETWORK

June 1991

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The overall objective of the Youth Business Learning and Development Centre (commonly referred to as Youth Business Centre) is "to provide employment disadvantaged adults with sufficient training to become competitive in the labour market." Programs are 24 weeks in duration, during which time participants receive:

1) Job-specific clerical training,

2) Academic Upgrading, and

3) On the job work experience.

These are the three key components of training programs.

Program Participants

The target populations of the Youth Business Centre are social allowance recipients, single parents, the physically handicapped, immigrants, youth and visible minorities. Participants may consist of members of just one of the above groups, or a combination of several groups depending on the source of funding.

Criteria for eligibility are also dependent on funding sources, but applicants wanting to be considered for admission must:

1) Be unemployed;

2) Have been out of school for a year or over;

3) Have a low grade achievement, and;

4) Be 19 years of age or over.

Applicants must be motivated to pursue the above components of the Centre's training program.

Goals of the Youth Business Centre

In pursuing its objective, the Centre has developed the following goals:

1) To select suitable employment disadvantaged candidates who have demonstrated that they are most "in need" of the training program.

2) To provide the academic upgrading necessary for those selected students to compete successfully for employment.

3) To provide students with all the job-specific skills and training necessary to secure employment in the clerical field.

4) To provide work experience directly related to skills and training obtained in the classroom.

5) To gather program-related data aimed at making the program more efficient.

6) To develop a solid consistent revenue base for programs being offered.

Program Design

Historically, the Youth Business Centre has always provided clerical training. In the past 15 years, since the Centre's inception, programs provided have continued to evolve with the intention of meeting participants' needs while they are in training, and to ensure that skills acquired will materialize into employment once training is completed.

The basic elements of a Youth Business Centre training program are:

- classroom training, 6 weeks;
- first work experience, 3 weeks;
- classroom training, 6 weeks;
- second work experience, 4 weeks;
- classroom training, 4 weeks; and
- job search preparation, 1 week.

Classroom subjects are all those specific to the Department of Education's Graduate Equivalency Exam (G.E.D.). Students are also taught Business English and Mathematics, Typing, Accounting, and three software packages (Wordperfect, Lotus 1-2-3, and DBase III Plus). Work placements are viewed as an opportunity for students to practice acquired skills. In the final week of class, students receive instruction in job search skills, including resume preparation, and interview skills.

It is anticipated that attaining a higher academic standing, the acquisition of specific job skills, combined with actual work experiences makes the Youth Business Centre graduate a favourable candidate in the competitive job market.

The Youth Business Centre employs a "core staff" of three - the Executive Director, the Director of Administration, and an office secretary. Staff claim that a minimum of three teachers is required to operate a program efficiently.

Educare

As well as providing training programs to employment disadvantaged groups, the Youth Business Centre has developed and continues to expand "Educare." Educare is the contract training division of the Centre which provides fee-for-service software training courses to individuals and groups from the public and private sector, in the form of day and evening courses. In the immediate future the plan is that Educare will focus more directly on the private sector market. It is anticipated that Educare will result in reduced dependence on public funding to offset the operational costs of the Centre.

Issues

Nine evaluation issues are identified in this assessment. The issues fall into three groupings:

- **Impact/Effect Issues** - examine whether the Program accomplishes that which it resolves to do, as well as addressing unintended impacts of the Program.

- **Cost/Benefit Issues** - look at whether the costs of operating the Program are offset by comparable measurable benefits, recognizing that not all benefits are directly measurable.

- **Interaction Issues** - look at the Program in relationship to other programs, agencies and employers in the community.

IMPACT/EFFECT ISSUES

Five evaluation issues are raised in this category. Some parallel those outlined in other ERN evaluations. Others denote program components unique to the Youth Business Centre. All are central to the objective of any evaluation - Does the Program make a difference?

- Did the Program assist participants in obtaining/maintaining employment? In making career advances in their employment? (C)*

- Did the Program end/reduce the participants' dependence on social assistance? (C)*

- Did the Program strengthen participants' personal sense of employment readiness? (C)*

- Did the Program improve participants' personal financial situation? (C)*

- Is the selection process effective in identifying successful candidates?

* "(C)" denotes ERN core issues.

COST/BENEFIT ISSUES

The effectiveness of a program, that is whether a program achieves its desired results, should be weighed against the amount of effort and resources expended

to produce those results. Equally important is ensuring that scarce resources are not wasted in achieving this success. Two cost/benefit issues are raised as a means of examining this efficiency concern. These are:

- What were the costs of the Program compared to Social Assistance? (C)*
- What interventions contribute most to employability? (C)*

* "(C)" denotes ERN core issues.

INTERACTION ISSUES

Two issues focus on this Program's relationship with other programs, agencies - specifically cognate and upstream/downstream agencies - and employers in the community. An "upstream" program refers students to the Youth Business Centre and will often provide basic life skills training. A "downstream" training program offers more advanced technical training, an example of which would be a community college or university. A "cognate" agency offers parallel support, e.g., counselling. The interaction issues are:

- Does the Program's relationship with employers increased the program's effectiveness in assisting participants to obtain and maintain employment?
- Does the Program's relationship with other agencies increase its effectiveness in assisting participants to obtain and maintain employment?

Issues and Conclusions

The conclusions associated with each of the nine evaluation issues researched in this evaluation are summarized on the following pages.

1. **Did the Program assist participants in:**
   - **obtaining employment; and**
   - **maintaining employment?**

CONCLUSIONS

Questionnaire data reveal that the Program assisted participants who were previously social allowance recipients, or who had not been employed for a long time, in both obtaining and maintaining employment.

The participant survey data, supplemented by personal interviews indicate that the Program has assisted the above groups, as well as those who have been employed more recently in obtaining and maintaining more attractive employment.

2. **Did the Program end/reduce participants' dependence on social assistance?**

CONCLUSIONS

Fifty-three participants surveyed were fully or partially dependent on income assistance in the 6 month period before

training. About 50% of these participants reduced their dependence on social assistance in the 6 month period following training. The majority receiving income assistance 6 months after, reported receiving less. The Program has improved participants' abilities to deal with all difficulties which impeded their obtaining and maintaining employment prior to taking training.

3. Did the Program strengthen participants' personal sense of employment readiness?

CONCLUSIONS

In-person interviews and survey data suggest that Program participants did not report or perceive family-related difficulties as an impediment to employment. (Readily available day care being the exception). But they did report their ability to handle personal problems improved as a result of the Program.

4. Did the Program improve the participants' financial situation?

CONCLUSIONS

The Program has been very successful in raising the level of income of its participants: Only 31% of respondents reported receiving some income assistance in the 6 months following the Program, while 63% reported receiving assistance in the 6 months prior to the training.

5. What were the costs of the Program compared to social assistance?

CONCLUSIONS

Eighty-five percent of survey participants reported feeling financially better at the time of the survey than in the six months prior to Program training. And 67% reported their income is higher now than in 6 months following completing training.

CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of available data, including the Program's budget, indicates that the total initial cost of participants receiving training may exceed the cost of those same participants receiving social assistance. The number of participants obtaining employment indicates that in the long-term this Program is cost-effective.

Educare will continue to play a significant part in offsetting the costs of programs for employment disadvantaged groups.

6. What interventions contribute most to employability?

The results of the participant survey and the in-person interviews indicate that students found all components of the training program helpful and in this context the weekly administrative meetings and counselling from HROP (Human Resources Opportunity Program) least helpful. The indication

the opportunity to practice newly acquired skills.

Although not a specific "intervention", past participants frequently referred to the concern and availability of staff as being instrumental to the success of participants and the overall success of the Program.

7. **Does the Program's relationship with employers increase its effectiveness in assisting participants obtain and maintain employment?**

CONCLUSIONS

Employers were supportive. They consistently reported that the key to providing work experience and job is their history with the Youth Business Centre, their relationship with Centre staff, and their knowledge of what the Program has to offer. All employer hosts reported some hiring of participants.

8. **Is the selection process effective in identifying successful candidates?**

CONCLUSIONS

There is strong indication that the Program's selection process is effective in identifying successful candidates. Information obtained from a number of sources indicates both a high number of participants obtaining their G.E.D., and employment upon completion of training. Participants employers and some agency representatives report perception of participants as being more mature, independent and having less personal problems than other trainees.

9. **Does the Program's relationship with agencies increase its effectiveness in assisting participants obtain and maintain employment? Participants upon their completion of the Program.**

CONCLUSIONS

There is some indication that this project's relationship with some specific agencies may be a positive factor for Agency and Centre staff, as well as certain participants in the initial stages of a Program. It cannot be said that such relationships assist participants in obtaining and maintaining employment.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study the evaluators recommend the following:

- The Youth Business Learning and Development Centre continue to develop programs for its designated target groups. These training programs should continue to recognize the special difficulties these population groups have when seeking employment, as well as acknowledging the skills and attributes individuals in these groups possess on entering the Program.

- The Youth Business Learning and Development Centre increase its contact and outreach to those agencies that serve potential Youth Business Centre students, but who are currently not making referrals.

- The Youth Business Learning and Development Centre continue its efforts to maintain a balance between SARS referrals who may or may not have previous histories of employment, and other target population groups.

Lessons Learned

The Youth Business Centre has chosen to provide training programs with the goal that participants can obtain and maintain employment in clerical positions - positions for which there is a continuing demand. Through its screening process, the Centre is able to select candidates who are committed and motivated to complete training and go on to employment in clerical fields.

As the majority of participants (87.6%) report having been employed at some point in their lives, they have, perhaps, a clearer understanding of their career goals and how to go about achieving them, than may be the case with participants from other training programs. This selection process is an important part of the overall success of the Youth Business Centre.

The Centre's consistently positive relationship with local businesses enables participants to practice acquired skills while in training. It also increases the chances of obtaining jobs after training. The wage rates offered by most of these businesses is consistent with the needs of participants, especially those who are single parents.

These wages are also sufficient to compensate for the transition from the benefits provided by social assistance. As well, jobs obtained offer a reasonable degree of stability and security and room for advancement.

In looking at the Youth Business Centre, five factors for success are:

1) the Centre provides job-specific training in;

2) occupations for which there is a present demand;

3) the Centre has a positive relationship with the business community;

4) and training motivates committed participants;

5) who have a good possibility of obtaining employment that offers good wages and other benefits.

These factors are key to the success of the Youth Business Learning and Development Centre and to the success of its participants in respect to employment.

1.
INTRODUCTION

Youth Business Learning and Development Centre, Inc. develops and implements 24 week training programs which provide participants with the opportunity to obtain academic upgrading, job-specific clerical skills and training, and work experience placements relevant to the training and skills acquired. The Centre provides training to participants under the Canadian Jobs Strategy category, as well as collaborating with local agency representatives and funding bodies for the purpose of developing training programs for specific target groups which include recent immigrants and persons with physical disabilities.

This document presents the findings of the evaluation study of the Youth Business Learning and Development Centre. This report and the previous evaluation assessment were prepared by Prairie Research Associates, Inc. in Winnipeg for The Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group.

Purpose of the Study

An Evaluation Assessment of the Youth Business Learning and Development Centre was carried out in May, 1989. Consistent with The Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group (CLCG) and ERN approach to carrying out evaluation activities, this assessment provided the basis for the evaluation study which was conducted between September and October, 1990.

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine whether the program developed by the Youth Business Centre is an efficient and effective way of enhancing the employability of disadvantaged workers identified as the Centre's target groups. Based on an assessment of the nine issues identified during the Evaluation Assessment, this Evaluation Study provides an understanding of the impact of the various components of a training program on its participants. This study also examines the Centre's relationships with the business sector, and with local community agencies. The impact of these relationships on assisting participants in obtaining and maintaining employment is examined.

Evaluation Objectives

Pursuant to the Evaluation Assessment and a decision by the ERN evaluation Steering Committee, nine issues were determined to be of central importance

in evaluating the training programs provided by the Youth Business Learning and Development Centre. These issues are outlined in Exhibit 1, on the following page, together with the quality of data used in assessing the issue.

Exhibit 1. COVERAGE OF ISSUES FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE YOUTH BUSINESS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

ISSUES	DATA COVERAGE
1. Did the Program assist participants in: - obtaining employment - maintaining employment?	H
2. Did the Program end or reduce participants' dependence on income assistance?	H
3. Did the Program strengthen the participants' personal sense of employment readiness?	H
4. Did the Program improve the participants financial situation?	H
5. What were the costs of the Program compared to social assistance?	M
6. What interventions contribute most to increasing employability?	H
7. Does the Program's relationship with employers increase its effectiveness in assisting participants obtain and maintain employment?	H
8. Is the selection process effective in identifying successful candidates?	H
9. Does the Program's relationship with other agencies increase its effectiveness in assisting participants obtain and maintain employment?	M

Coverage:
H = High
M = Medium
L = Low

Structure of the Report

This report is structured in the following manner:

BACKGROUND

- Mission statement, objectives and benefits of ERN initiative.
- A brief overview of the Youth Business Learning and Development Centre, including its objectives and activities.

STUDY DESIGN

- A presentation of the different methodologies used to address the issues central to this evaluation.

FACTS, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- A discussion of each evaluation issue and the research questions relevant to those issues. Information obtained during this study is presented in the context of the evaluation issues. Findings and conclusions, based on the analysis of the data, are introduced.

CONCLUSION

- An overall synopsis of this study with conclusions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- An outline of the recommendations proposed arising from the information obtained, and the conclusions reached following analysis of that data.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Mr. Warren Gander for his assistance in all phases of the evaluation assessment and the evaluation of the Youth Business Learning and Development Centre. His sharing of Centre data base and file information, as well as his insights on the Centre's training programs, and the participants, were very useful. We also want to thank Ms. Linda Taylor, Director of Administration, for her input, especially in regard to the work placement aspects of the Centre's training programs. Thanks are also extended to Ms. Cheryl Hammer, Secretary/Receptionist for her assistance in providing files for review, samples of the data base, and additional information on the Centre.

We would also like to thank the many participants of past Youth Business Centre training programs who so willingly discussed with us their experiences before during and after training at the Centre. Work experience hosts and representatives of referring agencies, and other training programs also willingly volunteered their time to contribute their ideas and insights.

The quantity and quality of data obtained in this evaluation would not have been possible without all the above people. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

2.
BACKGROUND

Mission Statement of Employability Resources Network (ERN)

The Employability Resources Network (ERN) was undertaken to identify and promote effective ways of helping employment disadvantaged persons return to active participation in the labour market.

Objectives of ERN

The objectives of ERN are the following:

- To determine, through a comprehensive evaluation of a variety of initiatives, what approaches to enhancing the employability of disadvantaged workers, work best for whom.

- To demonstrate and test, using financial and technical assistance, approaches that are vital to enhancing the employability of disadvantaged workers.

- To develop and maintain a central information clearinghouse of employability enhancement techniques and materials. Contained in the clearinghouse are descriptions of Canadian and international projects, contact people, evaluations and bibliographies.

- To synthesize recent experience and recommend to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (funder) and other governments, effective approaches for enhancing the employability of disadvantaged workers.

Benefits of ERN

ERN has been designed to provide a "return" in the form of information and assistance to key stakeholders. They include Employment and Immigration Canada, other labour market or social service departments, projects being evaluated and demonstration projects, as well as communities, groups and individuals working or interested in the training and human resource development areas.

- Projects being evaluated will benefit from the objective examination of their services and outcomes for participants. Where appropriate,

suggestions for alternate approaches or changes will be made.

- Senior government officials will receive a synthesis of findings from evaluations, literature review and contacts with the employment community that will help in policy formulation and project development.

- Interested parties will also have access to a national clearinghouse of information on employment projects, projects, contact persons, and evaluations that will help in preparing funding submissions and in improving the quality of their services.

- Selected demonstration projects will be assisted to test innovative approaches.

Overview of the Youth Business Centre

The overall objective of the Youth Business Centre is "to provide employment disadvantaged adults with sufficient training to become competitive in the labour market." All of the Youth Business Centre's programs provide participants with:

1) Job-specific clerical training;

2) Academic upgrading; and

3) On the job work experience placements.

The target populations of the Youth Business Centre are social allowance recipients, single parents, the physically handicapped, immigrants, youth and visible minorities. Participants in training programs may consist of members of just one of the above groups, or a combination of several groups depending on the source of funding.

Criteria for eligibility are also dependent on funding sources, but applicants wanting to be considered for admission must:

1) be unemployed;

2) have been out of school for a year or over;

3) have a low grade achievement, and;

4) be 19 years of age or over.

Applicants must also be motivated to pursue the above three highlighted components of the training program.

To meet its overall objective, the Youth Business Centre has developed a number of formal goals (see logic model opposite page). These goals are:

- To select suitable employment disadvantaged candidates who have demonstrated that they are most "in need" of the training program.

- To provide the academic upgrading necessary for those selected students to compete successfully for employment.

- To provide students with all the job-specific skills and training necessary to secure employment in the clerical field.

- To provide work experience directly related to skills and training obtained in the classroom.

- To gather program-related data aimed at making the program more efficient.

- To develop a solid consistent revenue base for programs being offered.

Program Design

The Youth Business Centre relies on three methods to recruit applicants: word-of-mouth; agency referrals; and advertisements which are placed in a Winnipeg newspaper every 6 months just before the start of a new program. Through this ad the Centre attempts to reach applicants who have not heard of the Program by any other means. Agency referrals may be made on an individual basis. If a program is being planned for a specific target population, recent immigrants for example, a referring agency may recommend a group of candidates for training. Individuals referred through both processes must still participate in the Interview and Screening Process developed by the Centre.

An orientation session to the program is provided to all interested individuals. Persons referred by agencies and word-of-mouth can attend an orientation session on any Monday morning throughout the year. Those responding to the newspaper ad are oriented in January and August. Following the orientation session, interested applicants complete an application and a standardized test.

All applicants who meet the eligibility requirements are interviewed at least once. The purpose of the first interview is to assess the commitment and motivation of the applicant, and to evaluate an individual's support systems and resources. For example, single parents with pre-school children must be able demonstrate that they have made, or can make alternate child care arrangements for the time they will be in training. Applicants who show promise are interviewed again by another interviewer.

It is reported that the number of applicants is approximately five times the number of available positions. The Centre usually runs two programs annually with 24 participants in each program.

Historically, the Youth Business Centre has always provided clerical training. In the past 15 years, since the Centre's inception Programs have continued to evolve with the intention of meeting participants' needs while they are in training, and to ensure that skill acquired

will materialize into employment on the completion of training.

The basic elements of a Youth Business Centre training program are:

- classroom training, 6 weeks;
- first work experience, 3 weeks;
- classroom training, 6 weeks;
- second work experience, 4 weeks;
- classroom training, 4 weeks; and
- job search preparation, 4 weeks.

Classroom subjects are those specific to the Department of Education's Graduate Equivalency Exam (G.E.D.). Participants are also taught Business English and Mathematics, Typing, Accounting, and three software packages (Wordperfect, Lotus 1-2-3, and DBase III Plus). Academic upgrading, clerical training and other job skills training are taught by qualified teachers on contract with the Centre.

Work placements are coordinated by the Centre's Director of Administration.

When the necessary preliminary work has been completed the Director, with input from staff, identifies the most appropriate participant for each placement. Every attempt is made to "match" participants and employers. Consideration is given to factors such as: participant's preference for a particular company or size of company, participant's special areas of interest, skills employers require, and participant's ability to meet the requirements of the work experience placement.

The objective of the first work experience is to introduce participants to the work environment early in their training, and to strengthen their commitment towards a career choice. The second work experience is viewed as an opportunity to practice skills acquired throughout the training process. As well the work placements enable participants, staff and work experience hosts, together, to evaluate participants' skills and provide an opportunity for participants to set vocational goals based on real work experience.

Throughout the training, Centre staff are available to provide support and counselling to participants. As well, staff may refer participants to other agencies or programs if a certain need is there. A counsellor from the provincially-funded Human Resources Opportunity Program (a vocational counselling program, many of whose clients pursue training at the Youth Business Centre) is available on a weekly basis to participants who were social allowance recipients prior to entering training at the Centre.

At the end of their training, students may or may not obtain employment within the specific organizations where they were placed on work experience. Participants are expected to receive the training at the Centre which will allow them to easily move into a clerical work placement - and eventually a job. It is

expected that a higher academic standing, the acquisition of specific job skills, combined with actual work experiences makes the Youth Business Centre graduate a favourable candidate in the competitive job market. (Further detail regarding Youth Business Centre activities can be found in Appendix 1).

Resources

The Centre has been at its present location for the past five years. The building was obtained on a ten year lease, with an option to renew for an additional five years. The Centre has eight classrooms, two of which contain the Centre's 24 computers, another two which contain the Centre's 24 IBM typewriters, and four of which are used for other class activities. All computers and typewriters at the Centre are leased. Work experience placements take place in both public and private sector offices. All class activities, other than on-site work experiences take place at the Centre.

Funds to operate the Centre and its training programs are obtained through three sources:

1) Government (programs can be federally and/or provincially or municipally funded);

2) Private contributions (the Centre is registered as a non-profit organization); and

3) "Educare," the fee-for-service component of the Youth Business Centre. More detailed information about Educare is provided in Appendix 1.

Within the above funding arrangements, the Youth Business Centre employs a "core staff" of three - the Executive Director, the Director of Administration and an office secretary. The above positions have always been filled on an ongoing contractual basis. The number of teachers employed at the Centre is dependent on the number of students in training. Staff state that in order to operate efficiently, a minimum of 3 teachers is required per training program. All employers who teach employment disadvantaged students at the Centre are licensed teachers. (Please refer to Appendix 2 for further information on the Centre's Human Resources.)

While in training, students are paid the provincial minimum wage ($4.70 an hour). They are also entitled to all the typical benefits and deductions. Students whose funding is from federal sources receive their wages directly from the Youth Business Centre. In regard to students whose source of funding is from the Province, (students who were recipients of Provincial Social Allowance prior to entering training) the Centre is responsible for submitting attendance to the provincial authorities, who in turn are responsible for paying students while they are in training at the Centre. Students are paid the same amount while in off-site or on-site training. Students

who are being funded by Provincial Social Allowances are able to retain their Social Allowances medical and dental benefits while in training.

In regard to actual costs of operating a training program at the Centre, a recent proposal submitted by the Centre to train 48 students under the federal Canadian Jobs Strategy category, indicates that student and staff salaries account for approximately 85% of the requested funding. The request for student salaries, including benefits was actually $197,135.60 or 43% of the budget, while staff salaries, with benefits was $192,667.50, or 42% of the budget. When submitting for funding the Centre always reduces by 13% the expected cost of student salaries to account for students who were not complete the program, or for students who left the program early because they have obtained related employment prior to the end of the program. For the most part the Centre have always accurate in regard to this estimate.

The estimated cost for rent and utilities the one year training period was $37,686.19, teaching supplies $22,174.70, and other administrative costs, $7,943. The above figures can be considered as typical for any operating year.

Program accountability is maintained through ongoing reporting to the Centre's Board of Directors, composed entirely of a consortium of private sponsor companies. The Centre maintains detailed financial records, and has ongoing contact with government-funding bodies who receive information on the status of the Centre's students, and minutes of monthly board meetings, and participate with staff in program planning meetings. Data on students in the program are also maintained. Follow-up information on students who have completed the program is available. This information is usually obtained through participant contact with staff after graduating from the program. Information is more accurate and current on participants who have more recently left the Program.

3.
STUDY DESIGN

The evaluation of the Youth Business Learning and Development Centre involved the gathering of data from a number of different sources, and using a variety of different methods. Specifically evaluation data were obtained through:

- interviews with Program staff;
- a review of 300 of the Program's files and the Program's data base;
- a telephone survey of 300 past Program participants;
- interviews with 14 work experience hosts;
- interviews with 6 referring agency representatives;
- interviews with 3 "upstream" and 3 "downstream" agencies; and
- in-depth interviews with 20 past Program participants.

Exhibit 3, on the opposite page, outlines the nine central issues in this study, and the data sources employed to address these issues.

Chapter 4 presents a comprehensive discussion of the findings and conclusions with respect to each of the evaluation issues.

A brief discussion of the instruments used in this study follows.

Interviews With Program Staff

Several interviews were conducted with Warren Gander, Executive Director of the Youth Business Learning and Development Centre, and Linda Taylor, Director of Administration. The information obtained from these interviews was augmented by additional facts and details elicited through numerous phone calls and through written material that Centre staff provided. Information obtained from Centre staff resulted in the development of a good understanding of the history of the Youth Business Centre, and how the Centre's programs have evolved during its 15 year history. Staff perceptions regarding the Centre's relationship with present and past participants, social service agencies, and the business community contributed greatly to the development of a frame of reference for this study.

Program Data Base and File Review

In determining the parameters of this evaluation it was established that information would be gathered on training programs that had been offered at the Centre **over the past five years.** Centre staff were able to supply the organization's data base which provided pertinent demographic information on participants who had been enroled in programs conducted during this time period. Specifically, data base information was obtained on programs #22 through #30. These programs covered the time period from March 1986 (the date program #22 was completed) through March 1990 (the date Program #30 was completed). As well, there was a review of data base information on Programs labelled E2 through E9. Participants in these latter programs were comprised of members of specific population groups who were perceived as vulnerable to additional difficulties when seeking to obtain and maintain employment. These groups included young persons, recent immigrants to Canada, and individuals with physical handicaps. Although members of these three groups may have been participants in Programs #22 through #30, Programs E2 to E8 were specifically funded and implemented for these particular three groups.

The data base for the above programs contained information on all students who participated in the 17 programs that the Youth Business Centre has provided in the last five years. This data base review provided the following information:

- last known address and phone number of Program participants;
- age;
- whether the participant had been a social allowance recipient prior to acceptance into the Program;
- marital status - whether the participant was married or single at the time of acceptance into the Program;
- number of dependents;
- whether the participant was a member of an identified disadvantaged group - specifically whether she/he was of aboriginal descent, a member of a visible minority or immigrant group, or had a physical handicap which might present an impediment when seeking employment;
- whether the participant had graduated from the Program, had voluntarily withdrawn, or had been asked to leave the Program;
- grade levels achieved prior to, and after Program completion;
- typing and word processing performance scores;

- employment status - employment particulars, wage earned, and how participant first heard about the position secured; and

- the date that a participant last updated the Centre on her/his employment status, current address and phone number.

An example of information contained in the Centre's data base is provided in Appendix 3. Identifying information has been deleted.

A review was conducted of 300 student files, approximately 75% of the Centre's files on participants who had been accepted into the Program during the five year period being covered by this evaluation. The file review verified information obtained from the data base. This activity also provided insight into the circumstances surrounding individuals applying to the Youth Business Centre for training, as well as contributing information on family and employment backgrounds of participants.

The data base and file review provided preliminary information on the following issues:

- Did the Program assist the participants in obtaining/maintaining employment? (1)

- Did the Program end/reduce the participants' dependence on social assistance? (2)

- Did the Program strengthen the participants' personal sense of employment readiness? (3)

- Did the Program improve the participants' financial situation? (4)

- Is the selection process effective in identifying successful candidates? (8)

Telephone Survey of Participants

A telephone survey of past program participants was one of the primary sources of data collection for this evaluation. Participants were selected from the Centre's data base.

To alleviate some of the concerns that may have been felt about sharing personal information over the phone, the Director of the Youth Business Centre sent a letter introducing the survey to former participants. Addresses and phone numbers were taken from the Centre's data base and then checked with listings in the 1990 Winnipeg telephone directory and/or the 1989 edition of the Henderson's Directory. The latter is a local reference directory which may have individuals listed under their names, addresses, phone numbers, and/or occupations. Letters were sent to the most recent address obtained.

An introductory letter was sent to a survey sample of 238 participants. From this sample, 45 letters were returned by Canada Post as undeliverable.

Subsequent attempts to determine the addresses or phone numbers of these 45 participants were unsuccessful.

Following are the results of attempts to contact the remaining 193 program participants:

- 89 participants agreed to complete the survey;
- 81 phone numbers were out of order, or were wrong numbers, suggesting that those participants had resided there, but that their numbers have since been changed and/or given to another party;
- phone calls to 5 numbers repeatedly resulted in "no answer";
- 5 participants were out of the province or country, and were unavailable;
- 5 participants were unwilling to participate in the survey;
- 8 participants repeatedly asked the interviewer to "call back", suggesting some unwillingness to participate in the survey.

Attempts were also made to contact 20 participants at their last known place of employment. This was done as unobtrusively as possible, and only to arrange a telephone interview at a convenient time. Six individuals were reached in this manner.

The telephone questionnaire used in this study can be found in Appendix 1 of the Technical Appendices bound as a separate volume.

Results from the questionnaire are consistent with findings obtained from other methods used in this evaluation (see Appendix 2 of the Technical Appendices). There is a clear indication that the sample surveyed is representative, demographically, of the Youth Business Centre participant population for the following reasons:

- Of the 89 participants surveyed, 8 were males. Although the Centre does not record gender, this is consistent with the male/female participant ratio of 1 to 10 reported by Centre staff, and, with the ratio determined from the physical review of the file and data.
- The Centre's data base relevant to the time period and the specific programs covered by this evaluation indicates that 53% of participants were social allowance recipients. Twenty-three of the 89 participants surveyed (26%) reported their primary income before training to be Social allowances, whereas 59.5% reported receiving partial or full social allowance benefits in the six month period prior to training.
- Two population groups targeted by the Centre are recent immigrants and those persons of aboriginal descent. It was beyond the resources of this study to specifically address the issue

of cultural heritage, but qualitative data elicited from participants surveyed demonstrate that these groups were well-represented.

There was a high percentage (52.9%) of past Program participants that the evaluation team was unable to reach. Given the identified target groups of the Centre, this is not unusual.

The majority of Centre participants are on a fixed income when entering training. On completion of their program, and on obtaining employment it is only natural that they would move to housing which they could now better afford. Also given the relatively young age of Centre participants, it is expected that many would marry - or remarry - during the 5 year period that this study covered. With 90% of participants being female, most of those who have married have assumed a new last name, and relocated. As well, there is indication that a significant number of Centre participants have, for a number of reasons chosen to have unlisted numbers.

Given the above considerations, it is not surprising that fifty-three percent of the chosen sample could not be located. When allowing for attrition, that is recognizing that it should become increasingly difficult to locate participants from "less recent" programs, the sample surveyed and the findings obtained should be regarded as representative of the Youth Business Centre participant population.

The telephone survey provided data on Issues 1 through 6, as well as providing some preliminary information on the remaining issues. Issues 7, 8 and 9 pose questions that are related to the Centre's relationship with referring agencies and the business community, as well as looking at the Centre's success rate in relationship to other training programs. The other methodologies discussed below were used to provide answers to those questions.

Survey of Work Experience Hosts

A telephone questionnaire of work experience hosts was a valuable source of data.

This questionnaire was administered to 14 work experience hosts (the original plan was to survey 15 hosts, but one host was reticent to participate, being new to her position in the company). This sample of hosts was drawn from a list provided by Centre staff. Those surveyed represented both the private sector and different levels of government. Hosts were representatives of small offices, with as little as one support staff person, as well as large companies with support staff numbering well into the hundreds.

This survey provided information on the skills and training demonstrated by Youth Business Centre participants while in work placements. This survey also looked at the local business community's relationship with the Youth Business

Centre, specifically, as well as in comparison with other training programs in Winnipeg. Question regarding the employability of Youth Business Centre graduates within the general business community, as well as in the work host's environment were also addressed. This was done with the recognition that there is no expectation for work experience hosts to hire program participants when they complete training. The questionnaire used can be found in Appendix 3 of the Technical Appendices.

This survey provided useful information on Issue 7 (Does the Centre's relationship with employers increase its effectiveness in assisting participants in obtaining/maintaining employment?) As well, this survey allowed us to substantiate findings obtained from the participant survey regarding Issues 1, 3, 4 and 8.

Survey of Cognate/Referring Agencies

Eight agencies had been selected to participate in a survey of referring/cognate agencies. Six representatives were surveyed. One representative was not available, while another representative reported no one among agency staff was familiar enough with the Youth Business Centre to comment. Survey questions focused on the referral process to the referring agencies and the circumstances under which those referring agencies might recommend the Youth Business Centre to a client. The survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4 of the Technical Appendices.

Survey of Upstream/Downstream Agencies

A survey of three upstream and three downstream agencies was conducted. An upstream agency was defined as one which offers basic life skills training and which may refer applicants upon completion of the respective upstream agency's training program. Downstream agencies were defined as training programs offering a more advanced technical training, an example of which might be a community college. It was anticipated that these surveys would further clarify the Centre's role with other training programs, as well as provide reasons why participants select the Youth Business Centre, rather local community or business colleges. (The survey questionnaires can be found in Appendix 5 and Appendix 6 respectively of the Technical Appendices.)

Because of the small number of surveys conducted, the results from the surveys of cognate, upstream and downstream agencies cannot be considered fully representative of community agencies that relate to the Youth Business Centre. Agency representative provided information that addressed Issues 8 and 9; those surveyed did provide some important insight into the Centre's relationship with other community

agencies, the process of referring applicants to this training program, and reasons for referring candidates to the Youth Business Centre training program.

In-depth Personal Interviews With Past Program Participants - (Case Studies)

Twenty interviews were conducted with past program participants. (Appendix 7 of the Technical Appendices provides the guideline used in conducting these interviews). In selecting persons to be interviewed, every attempt was made to select individuals who represented a cross-section of Youth Business Centre participants.

As the in-person interviews were longer than the time taken to conduct the telephone survey, as well as being less structured, the conditions were more conducive to discussing the personal impact the Program had on participants' lives. In this regard, the in-person interviews contributed significantly toward reinforcing and enriching data obtained from the telephone surveys, as well as interviews with work experience hosts and representatives from community agencies.

4.
FACTS, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Issue 1: Did the Youth Business Learning and Development Centre Assist Participants in:

- **obtaining employment?**
- **maintaining employment?**

CONCLUSION

Of the 89 participants surveyed, only 11 reported never having worked prior to Youth Business Centre training. All other participants (78 or 87.6%) reported having worked for pay prior to entering to the Program. Of these, 60.3% reported a full-time position at some time prior to being accepted for training, and 77.9% reported that this position was permanent. However, only 39% of applications (n=37) had what we term recent work experience, that is they had been employed in the 12 month period prior to participating in training at the Centre.

There is clear evidence based on the survey findings that training provided by the Centre is equally effective in assisting 1) participants with recent work histories 2) participants with less current work histories 3) those who have never worked, and/or 4) those who are social allowance recipients, in obtaining and maintaining employment.

The Youth Business Centre provides specific training and skills development. In this regard, YBC programs are seen by many participants, especially those with more recent work experience, not as a means to obtain general employment, but as a source for training and skills development which will enable them to apply for, and assume different jobs from those previously held. Findings show that as well as assisting participants in obtaining and maintaining employment, the Centre directly assisted a large majority of YBC participants in finding and maintaining "attractive" employment, that is full-time jobs for which they had received specific training:

- *Obtaining employment* - 82.7% (n=67) of the participants obtained jobs within the first six months of completing the Program;

- *Maintaining employment* - Of the above participants, 71.6% (n=48) are currently working and have worked continuously for periods extending from six months to 55 months.

- *Obtaining/Maintaining "attractive" employment* - Of the jobs currently held, 82.2% are full-time positions. As well, 78% of Program participants are or have been employed in clerical positions, utilizing the skills for which they were trained.

ISSUE FOCUS

This issue addressed the primary goal of all employability enhancement projects: **Is a participant's employment potential improved as a result of Program participation?** Employment potential can be measured by examining whether participants are demonstrating a stronger employment history after participation than before. In other ERN evaluations "success" has been measured by a comparison of participants' employment history "before and after" training, in this way determining whether there have been any demonstrable employment-related changes. This is an effective measure for those Youth Business Centre participants who were employed shortly before entering training.

However, this evaluation included participants who had received training almost five years ago, and whose work experience spanned periods from less than a year before training to more than 10 years before. Also, 11 participants - approximately 12% of the sample surveyed had no work experience history before attending the Centre. We address the factor of past work experience in this issue, but recognizing that measurements of "success" in terms of "before and after" observations are strongly influenced by the issue of experience (i.e. as a control variable).

The Youth Business Centre target populations are collectively a diverse group with varied work experiences and sources of income. For this reason we address the issue of changes and impacts in employment patterns of Program participants, by controlling for four groups of participants who are characteristically different in terms of pre-Program employment patterns and income sources. In order to look at this diversity among participants the following sub-groupings were developed:

- Participants who had never worked (n=11) prior to Youth Business training;

- Participants who declared their primary source of income in the six month period before training to be City/Provincial Social Assistance (n=19);

- Participants who reported not working in the year previous to training (n=28); and

- Participants who had been employed within 12 months of beginning training at the Centre (n=31).

The above categories were established with the recognition that they would not be completely mutually exclusive. Where participants could be placed in more than one grouping, we chose that sub-grouping which allowed for greater

examination of the impact of the Program on improving employment potential of different participants. For example, 5 participants who were never employed were also social welfare recipients. In those cases we believed that participants never having worked took precedence over analytic interest about their being social allowance recipients, and we categorized them accordingly.

To reflect the diversity of Youth Business Centre participants, we determined that a positive change could be characterized by:

- A significant number of participants from all sub-groups who entered or re-entered the labour force;
- A significant number of participants from all sub-groups who maintained employment; and
- A significant number of participants from all sub-groups who maintained employment in more "attractive" positions - that is, positions that were full-time in nature and were directly related to training received while at the Centre.

How Many Participants Subsequently Found Work? How Many Participants Maintained Employment? Is there a Change in the Employment Patterns for Successful Participants?

Before presenting the highlights of our findings related to the employment status of members of these four sub-groups, some points require clarification:

- It is important to note that when we refer to "continuous employment" we have taken into account that participants may have left one job and immediately assumed (within a month) another job. We have defined this to be continuously employed, and maintaining employment. In most cases these new positions were assumed because they resulted in increases in pay and other economic and social benefits.
- In our analysis we did not interpret a participant's obtaining or maintaining a "temporary" position as not having "attractive" employment. Many participants, especially those who were employed with different levels of government were in "term" or "temporary" positions for a number of years, often earning salaries in excess of $25,000. In this regard, their status should certainly not be considered any less attractive than those occupying permanent positions.
- Finally, it is important to remember that this evaluation spans a five year time period with participants

Exhibit 3: Employment Status of Youth Business Centre Participants Following Training

Status Before YBC	Status After YBC				
	Never Employed After YBC	Obtained Employment After 6 Months	Continuously/ Currently Employed Since 6 Months After YBC	Currently Employed	Total
Never Employed Before YBC (n=11)	1	8	6	9	n=24
Social Allowance - Primary Income Source Before YBC (n=19)	2	14	8	14	n=38
Not Employed 12 Months Before YBC (n=28)	2	21	10	19	n=52
Employed Within 12 Months of YBC (n=31)	1	24	15	26	n=66
Total (n=89)*	6	67	39	68	180

* Totals add to more than 89 since individuals can appear in more than 1 category

graduating from YBC training programs at various times. Participants who obtained employment immediately after completing training, and who have been continuously employed may have feasibly acquired anywhere from 6 to over 50 months of work experience since YBC. This in fact proved to be the case.

In your analysis of the research findings we determined that the Youth Business Centre has directly assisted participants with both previous, and no previous work experiences as well as different sources of income in obtaining and maintaining employment. There was no significant differences between these sub-groupings in relation to their finding and maintaining employment (See Exhibit 3).

Participants With No Employment Experience Before Youth Business Centre

Eleven participants were included in this group. In the six month period following training at the Centre:

- 8 participants obtained jobs, 6 of these being a result of a work experience placement or a Youth Business Centre lead;
- All 8 of these participants worked for over 6 months in their first jobs after the Centre, the median number of months worked being 20 months;
- 6 of the 8 participants have worked continuously since leaving YBC. The median months of continuous employment has been calculated to be 25.3 months; and
- 7 of the first positions obtained were full-time, one being part-time.

In addition, 2 participants obtained employment more than six months after Centre training:

- At the time of the survey, both were currently in their first job ever, but had not yet been employed for six months; and
- One was a full-time position, and one was part-time.

In summary:

- Only 1 participant who was never previously employed has **never** been employed since completing training, whereas 10 participants have been employed in some capacity;
- 9 participants are currently employed, 8 on a continuous basis since leaving the Centre (although 2 participants have not yet worked for six months);
- 7 of the current positions are full-time; two are part-time.

Social Allowance Recipients

Participants in this sub-group reported their primary source of income to be social assistance in the six month period before Youth Business Centre training.

social assistance in the six month period before Youth Business Centre training. Four participants in this group reported having been employed in the 12 month period prior to training at the Centre. The remaining participants were last employed, from 1.5 to 4 years prior to attending the Youth Business Centre.

Nineteen participants were included in this group. In the six months period following training at the Centre:

- 14 participants in this sub-group obtained jobs, 9 of these being a result of a work experience placement or a Youth Business Centre lead;
- The median number of months worked by the above participants is 13.0 months;
- 8 of the above 14 participants worked for over 6 months in their first jobs after the Centre. These same 8 participants have worked continuously and are still employed; the median number of months they have worked, to date is 21.5 months; and
- All 8 current positions are full-time.

In addition 3 participants obtained employment more than six months after training:

- At the time of the survey 2 had been continuously employed for over one year - one in a full-time and one in a part-time position.

In summary:

- Only 2 participants from this sub-group have **never** been employed since completing training, whereas 17 participants have been employed;
- 14 participants are currently employed, 10 participants having been continuously employed since obtaining their first job after YBC.

Participants With No Recent Work Experience

Participants in this sub-group reported not having worked in the 12 month period before taking Youth Business Centre training. Participants reported their last jobs being from 1.5 to 10 years before YBC. Three-quarters of this group declared their primary source of income in the six month period before the Centre to be either Unemployment Insurance or Spouse's Income. In reviewing the survey findings, it was clear that participants were not always accurate in regard to declaring income. For example, three participants who had not worked for three years reported their primary source of income immediately before training to be U.I. Since this is inconsistent with U.I. regulations, their responses should, therefore, be viewed with some caution. However, participants reported last being employed, from 1.5 to 10 years ago, and for a period of about 16.1 months. Eleven participants reported their last job to be part-time, 17 stating their last job being full-time.

There were 28 participants in this group. In the six month period following completion of training at the Centre:

- 21 participants reported obtaining jobs, 15 of these being a result of a work experience placement or a Youth Business Centre lead;
- The median number of months worked by the above participants was 14.6 months;
- 17 of the above 21 participants worked for over 6 months in their first jobs after the Centre;
- 10 have worked continuously and are still employed, the median number of months they have worked, to date is 19.8 months.

In addition, 5 participants obtained employment more than six months after Centre training:

- At the time of the survey 3 had been continuously employed for over 10 months and were still employed.

In summary:

- Only 2 participants from this sub-group have **never** been employed since completing training, whereas 26 participants have been employed;
- 19 participants are currently employed, 13 participants having been continuously employed since obtaining their first job after YBC, 1 participant is currently on maternity leave; and
- Only 3 of the currently-held jobs are part-time positions.

Participants with Recent Work Experience

Participants in this sub-group reported having worked in the 12 month period before taking Youth Business Centre training. On average, this last job was held for 17.7 months. Thirteen participants (42%) reported working on a part-time or casual basis. Of the 18 participants who had been employed full-time in the 12 month period before attending the Centre: 8 had quit their last job, 7 had been laid off, 1 chose not to return from maternity leave, and 1 left her job when she moved to Canada. This information is consistent with many of the above participants reported receiving partial social assistance in the six month period immediately prior to Centre training.

There were 31 participants included in this sub-group. In the six month period following training at the Centre;

- 24 participants in this sub-group obtained jobs, 13 of these being a result of a work experience placement or a Youth Business Centre lead;
- The median number of months worked by the above participants is 16.0 months;

- 21 of the above 24 participants worked for over 6 months in their first jobs after the Centre; and

- 15 have worked continuously and are still employed, the median number of months they have worked, to date is 22.1 months.

In addition, 5 participants obtained employment more than six months after Centre training:

- At the time of the survey, 2 had been continuously employed from over 2 years and were still employed.

In summary:

- Only 1 participant from this sub-group has **never** been employed since completing training, whereas 30 participants have been employed;

- 26 participants are currently employed, 17 participants having been continuously employed since obtaining their first job after YBC; and

- 2 of the currently-held jobs are part-time positions.

Exhibit 3 above summarized the employment experiences of Youth Business Centre participants following completion of Centre programming. Exhibit 4, below summarizes the nature of employment obtained/maintained by participants before and after Program participation. In reviewing Exhibit 3, it is again important to recognize that occupying "temporary" positions should not be immediately interpreted as less "attractive" than permanent positions. Several participants who reported being employed for various levels of government have in fact occupied term positions longer than permanent positions they had obtained before Centre training. As well, it is important to acknowledge that reference to last position held "before" training may be referring to employment experiences ranging from 1.5 to 10 years before Centre training.

Study data reveals no differences among the various sub-groups in the survey sample with respect to their ability to obtain and maintain employment following training. It is clearly evident that the Centre is substantially successful in enhancing the employability of participants irrespective of their past work experience, and sources of income.

Exhibit 4

Employment Status of Job	Before	After
Full-time	60.3	82.2
Part-time	39.7	17.8
	100.0	100.0
Permanent	77.9	67.2
Temporary	16.9	24.2
Seasonal	2.6	2.9
Casual/on-call	2.6	5.7
	100.0	100.0

Source: Telephone Survey of Participants

How Many Participants Found Work in an Area Related to Training? How Many Maintained Work in an Area Related to the Training?

The Youth Business Learning and Development Centre is a long established program. In contrast to many other employment training programs, it is most comparable to a business school. Its 24 week semesters feature regular application periods, and a defined commencement date. During the Program participants acquire specific marketable training and skills to prepare them to compete and acquire jobs in the clerical field.

Youth Business Centre participants are typically comprised of women with some labour force experience. Some have withdrawn from the labour force to raise families. Some had become single parents at an early age, and had spent little if any time in the labour force. Others had continued to work full-time for significant periods. Most jobs held were in occupations with low rates of pay, poor hours, and few prospects. One women, who had worked as a waitress, in restaurants and bars for a number of years perhaps typified the experiences of many others when (in an in-person interview) she stated "*even with tips, it wasn't enough, and it wasn't worth it... I never saw my kids, I wanted more for myself and for them.*" Participants surveyed frequently expressed comments such as "*it was a dead-end job,*" and "*I wanted a job with more incentive*" when asked why they had quit their last job.

Others could only obtain part-time or casual employment. If sole support parents, this resulted in their remaining dependent on social allowances as their needs and the needs of their dependents could not be met on the salary earned from such employment situations. This patters is seen in Exhibit 5, based on the telephone survey where very few respondents indicated they have left their previous position because of lay-off or being terminated. A full two thirds quit their previous job. Approximately one-third of the respondents who were surveyed **and** who had quit their jobs reported doing so in anticipation of starting training at the Centre.

Exhibit 5

	Frequency	Percent
Quit	52	66.7
Fired	2	2.6
Laid Off	12	15.4
Temporary	4	5.1
Other	8	10.3

In the in-person interviews there was a definite indication that participants, especially those with more recent work experience had certain hopes or expectations of what the YBC training might do for them. As well in the telephone survey almost 25% of participants surveyed had occupied jobs which had non-business hours such as bar tending or waiting tables. The skills provided by the Youth Business Centre, they anticipated, would be a way of

"normalizing" their work day to allow more time for family and friends. These and others came from families who they remembered as very rarely being employed, and most often being depends on income assistance. These individuals were wanting to secure employment - any employment. Comments such as "*I was hoping to get an office job, but I was doubtful*", and "*I never really expected to get a job here, and certainly not right after finishing training... my family sees me as a role model now*" were not untypical.

Many participants also stated they had an explicit goal such as working for government or for a major local company. These goals were sometimes formulated even before participants had direct contact with such businesses through their work placement experiences. For various reasons, including better pay, better hours, and the opportunity to better combine personal and family responsibilities, participants had identified working in specific clerical positions and office environments, generally, as being more "attractive".

While recognizing these facts, there is indication that a percentage of participants are quitting jobs to attend the Youth Business Centre perceiving Centre as being able to offer them better future economic prospects. In our opinion, continued attempts should be made to accept more Social Assistance recipient referrals.

As the same time recognizing it is the aim of the Youth Business Centre, to train participants for clerical and office-related positions, and it is the hope of participants to obtain and maintain such positions, another measure of success in terms of employment pattern, then, could be the types of occupations in which participants were engaged as opposed to the duration of employment before and after. Exhibit 6 (below) shows the occupations before and after program participation. This exhibit demonstrates the considerable success Youth Business Centre participants have had in securing positions in their chosen occupations.

Exhibit 6

Before		After	
Previous Occupations		**Current Occupations**	
Waiter/Waitress	21.3%		
Assembly Worker	14.6%	Non-Office Related	12.3%
Maid/Cleaner	4.5%		
Cashier	20.2%		
Office Worker	7.9%	Clerical/Office	68.5%
Managerial	4.5%	Had Office Job, Now Not Working	14.6%
Never Employed	12.4%	Never Employed Since Centre	6.7%
Total	**100.0**	**Total**	**100.0**

It is apparent that most Youth Business Centre graduates whether they have or have not been employed in the past perceive an increased status associated with clerical positions, especially those with government. This sense of having increased status should be seen as a motivating factor in participants' obtaining and maintaining employment, and in changing employment patters that in the past reflected generally sporadic work histories.

Exhibit 6 above, shows that 68.5% of participants who are presently working are employed in jobs directly related to the training received. An additional 12% of surveyed participants had worked in office positions, but were currently not working. The preponderance of the information collected supports the claim that graduates find work based on the skills learned while they are in the Youth Business Centre training program.

Further, it is apparent that for those who could be contacted and interviewed, a large majority are maintaining work in these areas.

In discussing the term "maintaining employment" in the context of the Youth Business Centre, it is possible to add another dimension to the evaluation of the impact on Program training on participants. The skills and training participants acquire while at the Youth Business Centre, are seen as transferrable and as providing a solid base for acquiring further knowledge and expertise in chosen employment situations. Given the five year time frame of this study, there should be some indication that this training program has been the impetus for some career movement and career advancement. The question of career advancement is addressed below.

How Many Participants have Made Career Advances in Jobs Related to Training Received?

Two indicators were used to determine whether there has been any demonstrated career advancement by employed Youth Business Centre participant. These were: (1) Increases in salary associated with career movement, and (2) Qualitative data provided by Youth Business Centre participants and employers.

In regard to the first category, career advances associated with career movement: 31 surveyed participants reported having occupied more than one position since completing training at the Centre. The other 58 participants either (1) had not been employed since completing training at the Centre, (2) had been employed but were not working at the time of the survey, or (3) had been continuously working in one job position since completing training. (The evaluators recognize that a person may have advanced in her/his career, while occupying only one position since graduating from the Centre. This possibility will be discussed later). The following is a summary of the 31 participants who have moved from their first job:

- 7 participants reported a reduction in their hourly wage, between their first and following jobs. Salary decreases ranged from 25 cents to $7.39 an hour:

- 9 participants reported an increase in hourly wage, ranging from 25 cents to $9.60 per hour; and,

- 5 participants reported no difference in salary.

As some participants are reporting on salary payments earned over a five year span, some of the above increases should, of course, be attributed to wage gains that reflect an increase in the general cost of living. However, even when allowing for 5% annual cost of living increase, some participants do seem to have made significant gains. It should be noted that increase in pay reported by participants who were and were not social allowance recipients immediately before training.

Other qualitative information regarding career advancement was provided through the survey of participants and employers, as well as through in-depth interviews with participants. Although no specific figures could be provided, employers interviewed reported that Youth Business Centre graduates that they hired have received promotions or re-classifications. Of the respondents surveyed, 65.9% spoke about going on to take further training. The indication was that this training was taken in order to adapt to technological changes within their office, and because they saw such activity leading to further advancement. Again, there was no differences between participants who were and were not welfare recipients prior to Program training.

Of course it cannot be said, nor should it be said, that these advances are directly attributable to the Youth Business Centre training program. However, many participants feel that it was the training program which provided them with the "boost" they needed to pursue their present endeavour.

Issue 2: Did the Program Reduce the Participants' Dependence on Social Assistance?

CONCLUSION

As Exhibit 7 indicates, respondents reported a diversity of income sources prior to participation:

EXHIBIT 7

Sources of Income 6 Months Prior to Participation	Frequency	Percent
Social Allowances	22	25.8%
Spousal Income	16	18.0%
U.I.C.	22	24.7%
Employment Income	18	24.7%
Partial or Full Income Assistance	53	59.5%

A little more than a quarter reported social assistance as their primary source of income in the six month period immediately prior to the program and another quarter reported partial support from income assistance. A quarter reported support from Unemployment Insurance while one-half of the sample survey reported income from spouses or employment.

The numbers on full social assistance dropped after the program. Only a small number (4 out of the 89 surveyed) reported more dependency on social assistance. Questionnaire data from the telephone survey reveal that more than half of those who were dependent on income assistance prior to training were not relying on income assistance in the six month period following completion of the Program.

Therefore, in regard to those participants who were fully or partially dependent on income assistance, it appears as though the program has had a positive impact on reducing that dependency.

ISSUE FOCUS

One goal of employability enhancement projects is to facilitate participants in ending their dependence on income assistance. When evaluating the Youth Business Centre, this goal was considered with the acknowledgement that the Youth Business Centre participant population is a diverse group with diverse sources of income. As well, the issue of dependence on income assistance must be looked at within the context of other issues addressed in this evaluation. For example, Centre participants acquire transferrable, marketable job skills and report obtaining employment in work environments that are perceived as "better" and "more attractive". The above should be seen as factors that

should assist participants in reducing their dependence on income assistance specifically, as well as enhancing their financial well-being in general.

FINDINGS

Did the Participants Receive Less Social Assistance After the Program Than Before? Level of Assistance Received by Comparable Population.

A review of the Youth Business Centre data base indicates that 53% of participants who began training at the Centre were dependent on social assistance as a source of income. Of the participants surveyed, 26% reported receiving full income assistance benefits, and 59.5% reported being primarily or partially dependent on such assistance in the 6 month period before starting training at the Centre.

Of the surveyed participants, 43 reported receiving income assistance, and reported a specific amount received (10 respondents stated they did not know the amount received) prior to Youth Business Centre involvement. For this group, the calculated average amount received monthly was $544.02. Twenty-seven participants reported receiving income assistance, as well as reporting a specific amount received, (6 respondents stated "Do not know" or gave no response) during the 6 month period following training at the Centre. For this group the average monthly amount was significantly less than before training - $408.62.

Of those surveyed who reported receiving income assistance past the 6 month period following training, 64% (n = 16) stated the amount received was less. Only four participants reported being more dependent on income assistance, that is, they were receiving more income assistance 6 months after completing training, than before program training. Survey data show that there is small difference (n = 2) when comparing the number of participants who received income assistance in the 6 month period following training, with those who are continuing to receive income assistance. Participants who broke their dependence on income assistance, did so very soon after completing training.

It is not possible to determine with accuracy whether participants are receiving less social assistance after the Program than before. It is reasonable to state that participants do seem to be receiving less assistance in the six months following program training than in the six month period before. However this statement alone does not recognize that many of these participants have a complex history of social assistance. For example, how long were participants on full or partial income assistance prior to beginning training? How many dependents were also receiving assistance at the same time? How accurate were participants who were reporting on rates of assistance received more than 5 years ago? Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope and resources of this evaluation to collect this level of detail.

Nor is it possible to gauge the level of assistance received by the survey sample with that received by a comparable group. The diversity in income support

noted in Exhibit 7 above, shows that a homogeneous comparison group is difficult to define.

There are also some important sub-groups within the Youth Business Centre graduate population which makes drawing parallels to a "comparable population" difficult. For example, a review of the that part of the Centre's data base relevant to this study shows that 73% of participants have either one or no children. As 90% of the Centre's participants are women, with most of them in their 20's, it is quite likely that some of the participants have taken, or will choose to take some time off in the future to start or complete their families.

Also, it is interesting to note that 26% of the participants who were in the Centre's programs which were especially implemented for immigrants, visible minority groups and those individuals experiencing difficulties in securing work due to physical handicaps (Programs E2 through E9) had attained a Grade 12 standing prior to Centre training. In the telephone survey they were less likely to consider their education a barrier to employment. For example in the case studies, and in the telephone survey those that identified themselves as immigrants were more likely to emphasize lack of Canadian job experience or Canadian education as a barrier. Individuals who identified themselves as immigrants were not typically on social allowances. Their employment difficulties were perhaps "comparable" but different from others experiencing difficulties obtaining employment.

Issue 3: Did the Program Strengthen the Participants' Personal Sense of Employment Readiness?

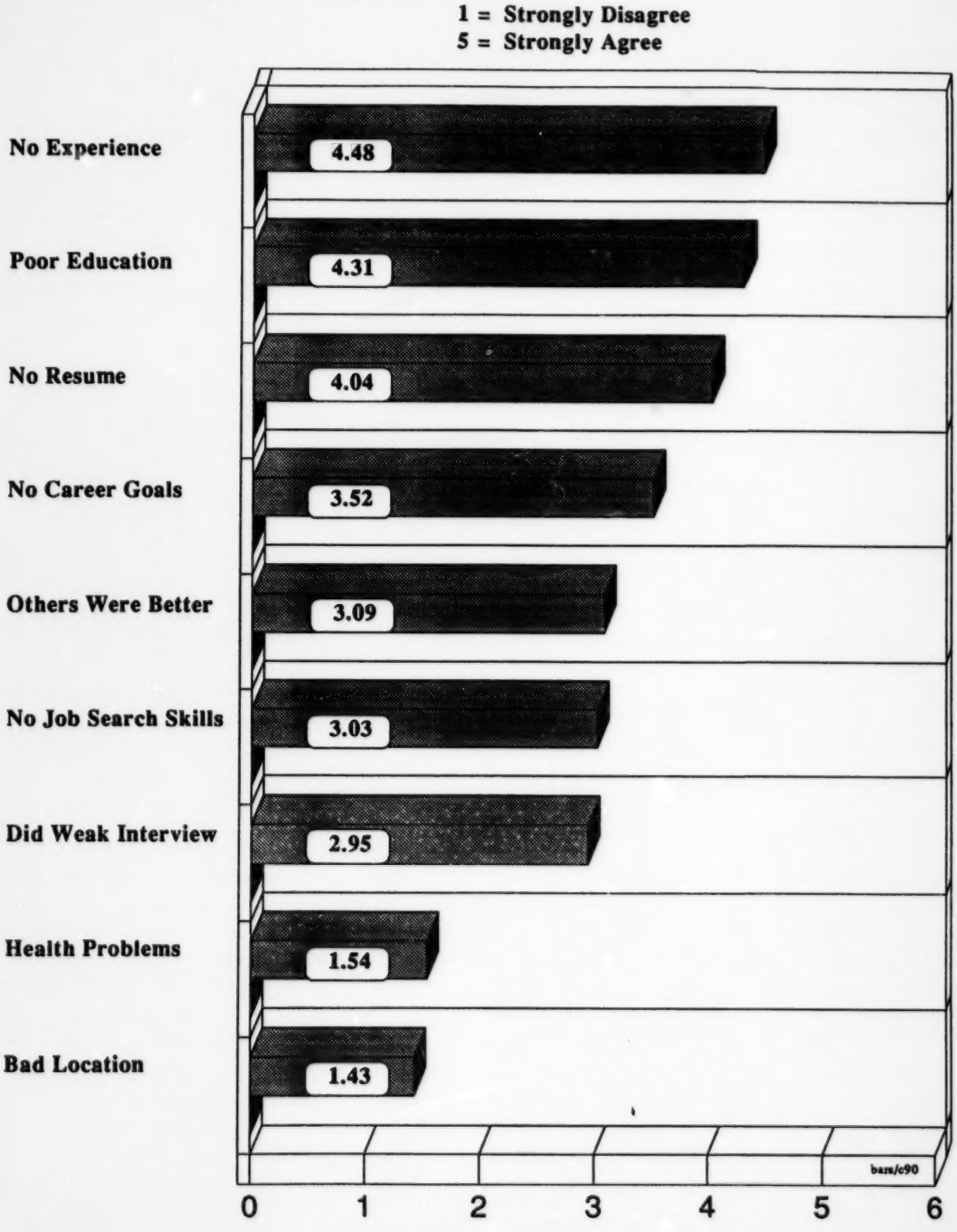
CONCLUSION

The majority of Youth Business Centre graduates (87.6%) had acquired work experience prior to being accepted into the Program. These participants had already previously demonstrated that they possessed the ability to obtain employment, as well as establishing that they had certain job skills. But those participants who were previously employed were generally dissatisfied with the jobs held.

Youth Business Centre participants agreed their lack of education (n=72), lack of experience (being interpreted as both lack of consistent work experience, as well as lacking in the background and training that would result in participants obtaining better works) (n=80), and the inability to prepare a resume (n=66), as the main problems in obtaining work. Lack of training (n=60), which was most often interpreted as the lack of training to advance upward within a job situation, and poor salary (n=60) were seen most often as problems which had interfered with those participants maintaining their employment. Over 73% of participants reported lack of training to be a problem in previous jobs.

Participants reported a certain sense of self-confidence related to their ability to

Problems Before YBC Participation



Source: Survey of Participants Q9

manage tasks associated with their previous employment (slightly over 60% disagreed with the statement "I didn't feel I was doing as good as others" in regard to previous employment). At the same time, the jobs they had held seemed to have a self-deprecating effect on participants. In in-person interviews, at least half of the participants reported that prior to the Program they thought themselves, both incapable of succeeding in training, or in handling any other type of employment held.

The telephone survey and case studies confirm that respondents have developed a heightened sense of employment readiness as it relates to their ability to secure office positions.

ISSUE FOCUS

In discussing the Youth Business Centre programs with Centre staff prior to the commencement of this evaluation, staff invariably stated that inherent in their programs is their belief that if the employment disadvantaged are provided with a supportive environment in which they can acquire specific skills and training that will make them employment ready, it will follow that participants' perceptions of their abilities and their own employment readiness will be enhanced, as a result of acquiring job-specific skills and training.

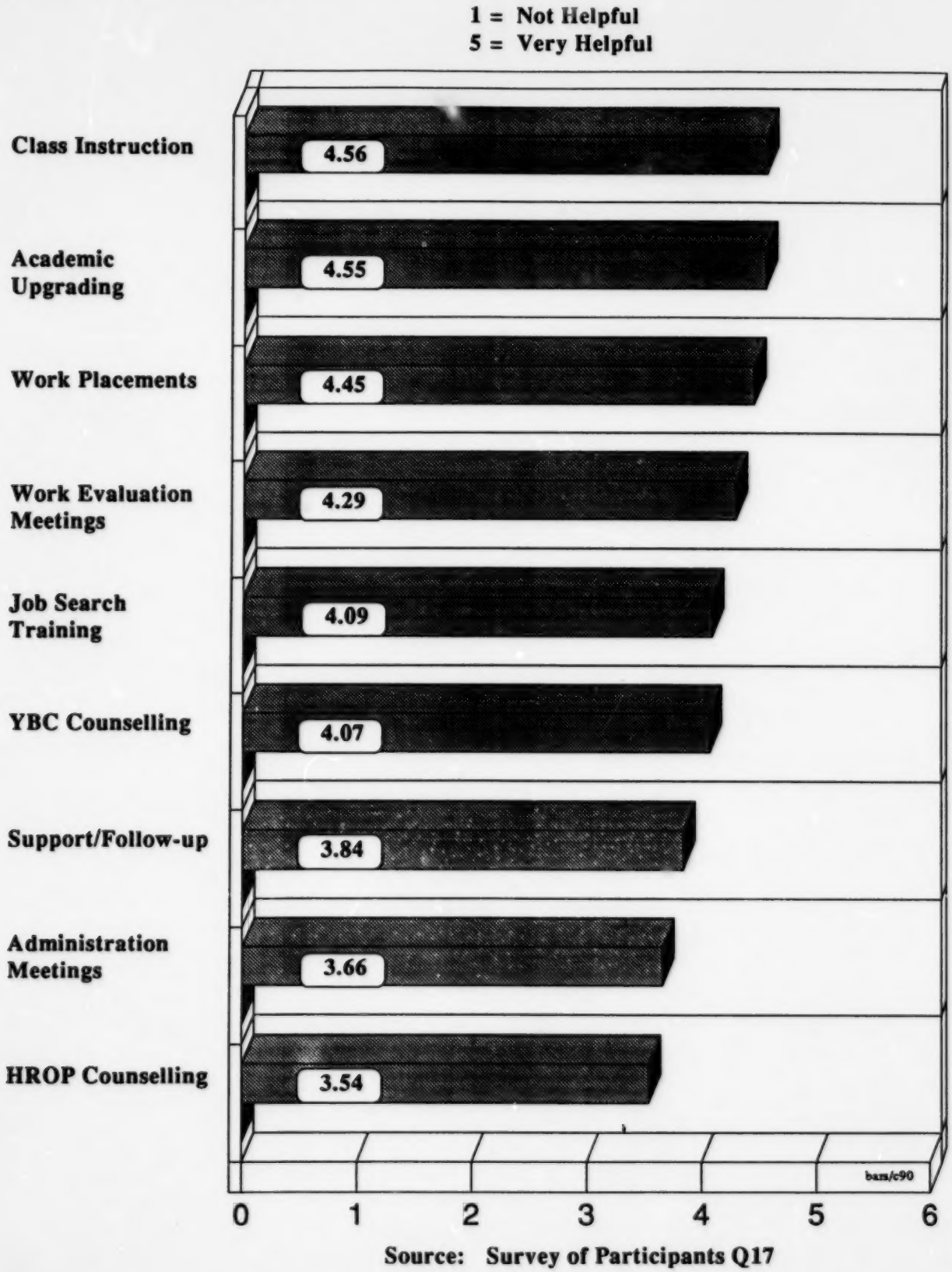
Essentially then the tasks of the Youth Business Centre were to provide participants with the training necessary to obtain and maintain employment in the clerical/office field, as well as to instill their participants with the confidence necessary to obtain and maintain employment in the above area.

FINDINGS

Do Participants Say They Feel More Ready for Employment After Completing the Program?

Of the 20 participants interviewed in person, 18 clearly and continuously reported a greater sense of self-confidence after the Program. These participants, articulated a greater, improved knowledge of where to look for office jobs, how to attain jobs, and a real preparedness and ability to master the tasks and responsibilities of the job once they were hired. While 65.4% of telephone respondents reported that personal or family problems were not interfering with their work prior the Program, their success in the Program had a positive spin-off effect in their relationship with family and friends (almost 10% of participants surveyed stated they are more able to handle personal/family difficulties). This in turn enhanced their work performance. As well, 95.5% of those surveyed reported they are more able to handle assigned job tasks.

Rating of YBC Services



Source: Survey of Participants Q17

Do Participants Say They Feel More Able to Interact in Work-Related Situations? Do Employers Say That Participants Have the Required Work-Related Social Skills?

Overall participants stated that they do in fact feel more able to interact in work-related situations, that is both in situations that bring them into contact with fellow employees and superiors, as well as in their interactions with the public. In response to the statement, "I feel more able to communicate in and outside of work now," almost 89% of participants surveyed agreed that there has been a positive change resulting from there training at the Youth Business Centre. In conducting the case studies, participants frequently spoke about being shy, and withdrawn before the program but being feeling much more confident as the program progressed, and they gained in skills, training and experience.

Employers confirmed that noticeable differences between students' in first and second work experiences placements, the latter group being more self-assured both in taking on work tasks, and in their interactions in all other work-related situations.

Do Participants Have a Stronger Sense of Self-esteem Since the Program?

Participants overwhelmingly reported an increased sense of self-esteem following completion of Youth Business Centre training - 95.5% of participants surveyed reported feeling more confident after training. In in-person interviews, participants directly attributed this enhanced image of themselves both to the Program, and to the staff who delivered to them the components of the Program. As the exhibit, on the opposite page outlines, participants placed a high value on the three essential components of the Youth Business Centre's programming:

- Academic Upgrading;
- Classroom Instruction (related to the acquisition of specific office-related skills and training); and
- Work Experience Placements.

Participants perceived these components as being directly related to their having secured desired positions in different offices in the public and private sector. The procuring of these jobs, resulted in their self-image being further enhanced.

In in-person interviews, more than half of those interviewed, without being directly probed, spoke about the significance of getting their Grade 12 equivalency (G.E.D.) and how important that was to their self-image, "It was a tremendous boost". Some participants thought they would never be high-school graduates: "After all these years, I don't have to hide the fact I didn't finish school". Obtaining a G.E.D. standing then has benefits in job search and actual employment situations. Obtaining one's G.E.D. standing, in and of itself appears to be very self-esteem enhancing. This in turn affects positively how participants do in job interviews and

their likelihood of being successful in those job interviews.
As well as the acquiring of new skills and training being a factor in participants' developing an increased sense of self-esteem, participants, both in the telephone survey and in the case studies frequently mentioned Centre staff as having a very positive effect on their self - esteem. Essentially staff had definite expectations in terms of participants' attendance, dress code etc., but they were also seen as warm and approachable.

Two representatives surveyed from cognate agencies, and who had regular contact with participants during and after their training at the Centre, reported often witnessing a marked difference in "before and after." Employers who had participants on both first and second work experience placements, often commented that students seemed to continue to gain in confidence as they tackled new tasks that they previously thought impossible.

It should be mentioned that participants as far as five years back reported that the Youth Business Centre and its staff had a very positive impact on their self-esteem. This was also the case with participants who were not working in a field directly related to training received and with those participants who had not been employed since graduating. Participants consistently and over time have reported the training received at the Centre to have a positive effect on self-esteem.

Did the Program Have an Impact on Family and General Life?

As noted previously in the telephone survey conducted, 65% of the participants indicated that family responsibilities were not an issue in their maintaining employment prior to their involvement with the Youth Business Centre. Additionally, over three-quarters of the surveyed participants disagreed with the statement that "personal problems interfered with my work performance" before training. Interestingly, over 69% of those surveyed stated that their ability to handle personal and family difficulties was however enhanced following participation in the Youth Business Centre training program.

The responses to the above statement are open to various interpretations. The results of participants' responses to the above two statements which are related to their personal/family situations prior to Centre training suggest that participants' family/personal lives were generally stable, or that participants were reticent to share information about their personal life situations over the phone. Sixty-nine percent of participants agreeing that the Program had a positive impact on their ability to handle personal/family difficulties may indicate that participants felt that to disagree might mean that they were not "more able to handle personal and family difficulties," the implication being that they were still experiencing those difficulties. The relatively high response rate of agreement to this statement could also be related to a spin-off effect - as the participants developed an increased sense

of self-esteem from involvement in the Program, and from obtaining jobs, those positive changes experienced by participants will also positively effect significant others.

Those individuals who participated in in-person interviews were more open about the impact of the Program on their personal circumstances. A few participants who had children at home related the difficulties involved in taking care of the needs of their children, and husbands, who in the past, had become accustomed to having them always available. One participant related that she and her husband were now earning a comparable income and that "it is now a major decision agreeing on who will stay at home if one of the children is sick... Before it was always me, as I was the one earning minimum wage."

Two respondents who participated in in-person interviews related that their circumstances had not changed for the better as a result of the Program, with one person believing that her individual circumstances had deteriorated; that her expectations had been heightened as result of the Program, but that these expectations to date had not been realized. She is now pursuing further training related to business/office procedures.

Three respondents related incidents of their getting into heavy debt, following their completing training and getting jobs. These participants reported being on a fixed income prior to Program participation. They admitted that, at least initially they were not prepared for the increase in their incomes. "You're always telling your kids 'you have to wait.' When I got a job I was so happy. I didn't want them to wait any more." One participant expressed difficulties managing her money while still at the Centre: "You get used to one cheque a month ... at first you go overboard because you know there will be another cheque in two weeks." Two participants suggested that the Centre could incorporate a few classes on personal budgeting into the Program: "Maybe they could introduce it in the accounting class."

Issue 4: Did the Program Improve the Participants' Financial Situation?

CONCLUSION

As is indicated in portions of this report dealing with other research issues and questions, the vast majority of Program participants who provided information for this evaluation indicate that their financial situations have improved considerably since completing the Program. Of participants surveyed, 84.1% (n = 74) report their income was less in the 6 months before training compared to now. As well, improved financial situations are indicated in less people being less dependent on less income assistance and reports of higher salaries being earned in jobs that have been obtained.

ISSUE FOCUS

In determining whether the Program had an impact on improving participants financial situation, it is again important to recognize that the majority of the respondents in this study reported working for wages at some prior point in their lives. Some individuals had extended work histories, but most participants had worked only intermittently. Therefore, in order to determine if this Program has had an impact on participants' financial situation, it is important to view participants' situation in the long-term. Will the career advances made by participants result not only in short-term improvements in financial situations, but will those career advancements also eliminate some of the problems experienced by participants in previous jobs, that made those jobs difficult to maintain?

FINDINGS

Do Participants Report any Change in Income?

As noted above, in the telephone survey 84% of participants stated feeling better off financially now than in the six months previous to Program participation. As well, the number of participants who were dependent on partial or full income benefits before and after the Program also decreased from 53 to 27 (those receiving income assistance 6 months after Youth Business Centre). As well as there being a recorded difference in income, and income dependency, before and after the Program, participants repeatedly verbalized that they and their families felt under less financial and emotional strain now than previously.

Employers and participants believed that Youth Business Centre participants had greater opportunities for advancement with the completion of their training program and their entry into the business workforce. Several participants reported significant salary gains as was previously noted in the section of the report focusing on career advancement. Other participants were taking steps to ensure financial security, career advancement and job satisfaction by taking job-related courses in night school and through correspondence. A majority of respondents - over 73% - agreed that one of the difficulties experienced in previous jobs was that their salary was "not high enough". Salaries earned needed to be more than minimum wage to offset the loss of social allowance, medical/dental benefits, cost of day care, and additional costs of working such as transportation and clothes. This study clearly indicates that participants should feel greater job satisfaction, certainly in regard to salaries earned which in turn has an impact on job satisfaction in general.

Issue 5: What Were the Costs of the Program Compared to Social Assistance?

CONCLUSION

According to administrative files half of the program entrants received social assistance prior to starting. A direct

benefit of the program is the extent to which social assistance payments are reduced because recipients find work. The program cost per social assistance participant is "repaid" in about 3 years.

ISSUE FOCUS

In terms of fiscal restraint, it is important for training programs to show a positive cost-benefit ratio. In regard to the Youth Business Centre, such indicators are applied along with acknowledging the perceived benefits of job-specific training and the unique characteristics of Youth Business Centre target groups.

FINDINGS

What is the Total Incremental Cost Per Participant? What is the Cost of Social Assistance for Each Participant? What is the Cost of Social Assistance for Each Successful Participant?

For every 100 entrants to the program, about half (52.8%) were recorded in the administrative data to have received social assistance prior to starting. According to the survey data, some 24% reported social assistance income during the six months prior to the program. Since the survey data reflect sampling and reporting error, the administrative data should be taken as the base.

Using Province of Manitoba Social Assistance Rates, and the family size data from the administrative files, the following Exhibit 8 represents the estimated monthly social assistance costs for every 100 participants in the program:

EXHIBIT 8

Social Assistance Costs Per 100 Program Participants

Number of Dep.	Number (Out of 100)	Monthly Rate*	Total (Monthly Cost)
0	13	$ 464	$ 6,032
1	21	621	13,041
2	12	847	10,164
3	6	1,010	6,060
	52		$ 35,297

The results of the telephone survey indicate that 30% of graduates continue to receive some form of income assistance recipients. Allocating this to social assistance, about 60% of those who enter the program on social assistance continue to receive this form of support after graduating. This suggests that the monthly social assistance cost per 100 participants drops to $21,178.2 for a monthly program cost saving of $14,119 per 100 participants.

Of the 48 participants per year, 25 (52%) would be expected to be social assistance recipients, for an annual cost of $203,310. After the year, based on the telephone survey, 60% would be expected to continue to receive social assistance, for an annual cost of $121,986 or a net saving of $81,324.

Number of Weeks Required to Recover the Cost of a Session from Social Assistance Savings.

The annual cost per student is $9531 for a total cost for all social assistance recipients of $238,275. The pay back for this expenditure in terms of reduced social assistance is 2.92 years ($238,275/$81,324).

The survey data considered only income from social allowances in the first six months. Some members of the graduating class may have found work after six months and the cost reduction might have been more in the second and third years after program completion. This analysis also assumes that those who came off social assistance remain off support indefinitely, making the annual cost reduction permanent.

Are Other Similar Programs Less or More Costly?

It would also be difficult to draw comparisons given some of the special characteristics of Youth Business Centre participants - intermittent or partial dependence on social allowances over a series of years, being single parents with different numbers of dependents. As the Youth Business Centre provides job-specific training in response to needs reflected in the business community, it can be argued that Centre participants are more likely to obtain and maintain employment than those from programs that do not offer specific training. Also, when indirect social benefits are considered, the conclusion is that the Youth Business Centre offers an effective public policy approach to social assistance expenditure reduction.

How Does Educare Contribute to Maximizing the Use of Space, Staff and Equipment, and in the Costs of Operating the Program?

As discussed in the introductory section of the evaluation report, Educare is the contract training division of the Youth Business Centre, that provides adult education and skill training, specifically computer training and academic training, for individuals and groups in the private and public sector. This training is conducted in the form of day and evening courses. As clearly stated in the Educare Mission Statement, the goal of Educare is "to establish a stable income to insure the economic viability and growth of the Youth Business Centre." The plan then is to continue to develop Educare fee-for-service programs, and in this way offset the operational costs of the Youth Business Centre, and reducing its dependency on public funding. A planning committee has recently been established to focus more closely on developing an action plan regarding future Educare activities. The future business objectives of Educare that have been developed are to:

- Achieve a level of activity which will generate a contribution of $185,000 in Year 1 (beginning in March, 1991).

- Expand this level of activity to generate a contribution of $410,000 equal to the fixed and variable costs (less students' salaries) for 2 x 24 students in the Year 2.

- Expand the level of activity to generate a contribution of $478,000 equal to the fixed and variable costs (less students' salaries) for 2 x 36 students in the Year 3.

The plan is that the activities of both the Youth Business Centre and Educare will continue to be conducted in the present location. This location allows for the continued growth of Educare and the efficient use of space, office facilities and equipment.

Issue 6: What Interventions Contribute Most to Increasing Employability?

CONCLUSION

Participants viewed those components of the Program that can be directly transferrable to work situations as the most valuable. The overall ratings given the various program components indicates a generally very positive response to the Program and Centre staff.

ISSUE FOCUS

The evaluators experienced no difficulties in delineating the specific program components that are associated with the Youth Business Centre, nor did the participants surveyed. When asked about program interventions and their impact on employability, participants frequently made reference to the self-esteem gained while at the Centre. Students were acquiring new skills and training. They also started to feel better about themselves, their capabilities and potential. Surveyed participants seemed to recognize that it is not sufficient just to have the skills. They also had to be able to acknowledge those capabilities within themselves and in turn to convey their competence to employers. That is, they had to present themselves as confident and capable of doing the job. Centre students, generally, learned the skills and confidence to acquire office/clerical positions.

FINDINGS

What Elements of the Program Training Skills Do You Use in Your Job? What Skills Were Helpful in Finding a Job? Which Expenses Training Were Less Useful?

When asked to rate the services, skills, and training provided at the Centre, participants surveyed gave the three key components of the Program - Academic Upgrading, Classroom Instruction in Office-related Courses, and Work Experience Placements - the highest ratings overall (on a scale of 1 to 5, participants rated these as 4.55, 4.56 and 4.45 respectively). The work evaluation aspects of Work placements were rated slightly lower than the actual work placement (4.29 to 4.45).

Participants were not as definite about the "Job Search Training" (4.09) as they were about the above three components of the Program. In in-person interviews, some participants stated that they had already found a job at this point (the last week of the class) and perhaps, and did not partake in that part of the classes. Others felt that Job Search Training

should not have been left to the end of the Program. Leaving it to the end made an important component of the Program "too rushed". One participant said that at the point that Job Search was introduced "those who had jobs weren't really interested, and those who didn't have jobs were really starting to panic."

"Counselling" aspects of the Program, and weekly administrative meetings received the lowest ratings. Additional qualitative data obtained in the telephone survey and in the case studies indicate that these low ratings may be related to participants' primary interests being on acquiring new skills and training - on learning. Participants sometimes spoke of wanting to and needing to "cover so much in so little time." The administrative meetings were seen as relevant but taking time away from the classroom. In regard to counselling, support and referrals provided by Centre staff (4.07), and the Winnipeg Human Resources Opportunity Program (3.54), the lower ratings may be in response to those students who stated that they really did not utilize Centre staff or WHROP for the above purposes but they "knew that staff were available". It is also quite possible that participants did not perceive support and advice - giving as "counselling".

Employers tended to rate highly a participant's ability to quickly adjust to an office environment, to be able to learn and "be open to anything and everything." The three components were seen as important aspects of the training program, both because of the practical knowledge that participants acquired, but perhaps more importantly they provided participants with a foundation for learning more. For example, at least one-third of the employers surveyed reported their offices do not use "WordPerfect", one of the computer packages taught at the Centre. These employers did not see this as a problem. Rather, they perceived participants having such training/knowledge as enhancing their ability to learn programs that are used in their respective offices.

How Many Participants Obtained Their G.E.D.:

- **immediately?**
- **eventually?**

Of the 73 surveyed participants who took the G.E.D. exam following completion of training at the Centre, 82% or 60 participants reported having attained their Grade 12 equivalency. Data indicate that if participants do attain their G.E.D. standing, it is highly likely that they will do so immediately following completion of Centre training, the mean difference being .23 months. There is then a definite correlation between the training participants receive at the Centre, and their being able to acquire a Grade 12 standing.

It also seems to be the case that if participants do not obtain their Grade 12 equivalency, they are not likely to make another attempt. Reasons for not making another attempt are not evident. Possibly, participants are disappointed at their perceived failure and are reticent to make another attempt. Perhaps participants do not try again as they do

not have the external encouragement that was previously given by Centre staff and fellow students. It is also possible that on acquiring employment, their motivation to attain a Grade 12 standing diminishes.

It is interesting to note of the employers surveyed all stated that the G.E.D. and the "regular" Grade 12 standing is recognized as comparable in their organization. Most felt that a participant with a G.E.D. would not be at a disadvantage in an actual work situation. Two employers stated that a person's previous academic standing might be a factor. That is, given two persons with a G.E.D. standing, a person with a previous Grade 11 would perhaps have an advantage over someone with a previous lesser academic standing. As suggested previously, the attaining of a Grade 12 standing in and of itself seems to be a real "confidence-builder" for Centre participants.

Issue 7: Does the Program's Relationship With Employers Increase the Programs Effectiveness in Assisting Participants Obtain and Maintain Employment?

CONCLUSION

A questionnaire was administered to 14 employers from both the public and private sector who provide work experience placements to Youth Business Centre students. Based on comments provided by work experience hosts surveyed there is good indication that the Centre has maintained a consistently positive relationship with employers in the business community. This positive relationship is demonstrated both in the number of work experience placements regularly provided to Centre participants (work experience hosts on average had been providing work placements to the Centre for at least 5 years), and in turn the number of participants that are hired by work experience hosts following completion of their training at the Centre (Please refer to Exhibit 9). Based on the information gained from the work experience host survey and the participant survey there is indication that this relationship is a factor in increasing the Program's effectiveness in assisting participants in obtaining and maintaining employment.

ISSUE FOCUS

The relationship of the Centre to the business community is a significant factor in Centre participants' obtaining and maintaining employment. This relationship results in employers consistently providing work placements to Centre participants. This is not always the case with many other training programs which request placements. This in turn, enables participants to practice newly acquired skills and gain confidence. The Centre states clearly that there is no expectation placed on employers to hire students on completion of training. Many employers however do, either hiring participants who have been placed at their organization on a work placement, or requesting "leads" from the Centre (Please see Exhibit 9).

Consequently, the Centre's relationship with the business community can be addressed both in terms of the work experience placements it provides for students, and the resulting paid employment situations.

FINDINGS

What is the Nature of the Program's Relationship With:

- **Consortium members?**
- **Placement employees?**
- **Other members of the business community?**

The Youth Business Centre's relationship with placement employers is built on several factors.

These include:

- Time - Most employers had been providing work experience for a significant period of time. Only three of the employers surveyed reported that they had been providing work experience placements for less than three years. One of these respondents represented one government department, and was aware of other departments that had been providing placements for longer.

- Reciprocal need - The Youth Business Centre is in need of work experience placements and businesses are interested in filling employment gaps and needs. The Youth Business Centre has demonstrated an ability to fill these needs, with minimal cost in time and resources to work experience hosts. As well, Centre participants are identified as having specific office skills.

- Social responsibility - Ten work experience hosts, from both the public and private sector frequently articulated their businesses' interest in, and philosophy of wanting to be involved in the community, of "lending a helping hand to local people". Work placements provide a good practical way of "making a contribution at a local level".

- Personal contact - Unlike many other training programs, there have been no recent changes in the Centre's administrative staff. Work experience hosts state they are "dealing with a known quantity". Centre staff are seen as being committed to the Program and its participants. Five hosts stated that a congenial but business-like relationship has developed between Centre staff and themselves This is not the case with programs that have experienced high turnover and have a shorter history.

Two work experience hosts surveyed were Board members of the Centre and/or their organization was a consortium member of the Centre. Five employers were uncertain as to whether their organizations were consortium or Board members. This perhaps was not unusual and understandable, given that these hosts were from large organizations whose activities were varied and numerous. It was not apparent from this

survey whether being a Board or consortium member of the Youth Business Centre has any direct impact on the work experience placements, and in Youth Business Centre participants obtaining and maintaining employment. Those two individuals who were Board and/or consortium members stated it provided an opportunity to represent their business views, which they believed to be a reflection of prevailing trends in the business community.

How Responsive is the Program in Meeting Employers':

- **Short-term employment needs?**
- **Long-term employment needs?**

The Youth Business Centre and its Program participants are seen as meeting both the short-term and long-term employment needs in the community. Eight employer hosts clearly identified Youth Business Centre Work placements as being an opportunity to meet the short-term employment needs of their organizations. "We can kill two birds with one stone ... we can meet some short-term needs while providing students with good experience." "It's a time of restraint and cutbacks, and they really help out."

Some work experience hosts saw Youth Business Centre participants as having the capability of meeting long-term needs. For example, four hosts surveyed stated that they saw those on work placements as "potential employees", and the work experience placement itself, as an opportunity to orient and "pre-train" those potential employees. The 14 hosts surveyed, collectively recalled their organizations hiring at least 40 participants, following completion of their training at the Centre. Many felt that their estimates of the number of participants hired was, if anything lower than the actual numbers. As shown below in Exhibit 9, this number is consistent with results of the telephone survey in which 49 participants, 59% of those surveyed, stated that they either obtained their first job after training as a result of their work experience placements, (n = 13) or from a Youth Business Centre lead (n = 36).

EXHIBIT 9

How did you find about your first paid job after the Centre?

	Frequency	Percent
Not Applicable	6	
Work Experience Placement	13	15.7%
Canada Employment Centre	1	1.2%
Friend Relative	7	8.4%
Newspaper Ads	14	16.9%
Submitting Resumes	4	4.8%
YBC Lead	36	43.4%
Other	8	9.6%

Of those participants hired, work experience hosts recalled two situations where Youth Business Centre graduates were "let go" because in the long-term, it was proven that they could not perform the job tasks assigned. Generally, work experience hosts recalled Youth Business graduates who had been hired by their organizations as doing well within their jobs and being promoted as they gained more experience. Others moved onto other organizations where they had secured "better" employment or had retired from the labour force temporarily to raise a family.

Overall the indication is that Youth Business Centre graduates are meeting the short-term needs of businesses through their work experience placements. Many go on to be hired in organizations where they may or may not have been placed on work experience (as shown in Exhibit 9, 49 respondents [59.19%] stated they got their first job as a result of work placements or YBC leads). In this way they meet the long-term needs of the business community as well.

Are Participants Viewed as More Employable than Participants Of Similar Programs Without Employer Involvement?

The employers surveyed perceived the other two key components of the Youth Business Centre training program, aside from Work Placements, (Academic Upgrading and the acquisition of Job-specific Skills and Training) as being real assets both during a participant's work placement and in subsequent employment she/he might obtain. Employers were unable to state conclusively that Youth Business Centre participants were more employable than other employees that might be hired as "the job tasks and responsibilities are all so varied, so are the students and the employment programs that we deal with."

Surveys of work experience hosts indicated work placements were considered as good pre-requisites to being hired within their respective firms. As well, although employers could not state that Centre graduates required less training on being hired, they did suggest greater preparedness to provide work placements to the Youth Business Centre. Given the number of jobs that result from work placements, the Youth Business Centre graduate does appear to be in good standing on completing training.

The data provided by 3 upstream and 3 downstream agencies regarding the employability of Youth Business Centre graduates is compatible with the comments of work experience hosts. Because of the small number of interviews conducted with upstream and downstream agencies information provided should only be presented in the form of opinions. Representatives from downstream agencies agreed that the training and experiences gained by Youth Business Centre graduates might give those individuals an advantage if they were to pursue further business training, for example if they were wishing to pursue becoming a legal secretary. Those representatives from two upstream agencies agreed that Youth Business

Centre graduates were more employable than "graduates" from most other upstream programs, while a third representative was uncertain, stating that 80% of those completing training in his particular agency program were believed to go on to be competitively employed. The three representatives from the upstream agencies, separately agreed that there were specific differences between the participants in their programs and those of the Youth Business Centre. Participants, on being accepted into the Youth Business Centre programs were perceived as functioning at a higher level academically, having a better developed personal support network, and a greater ability to deal with interpersonal difficulties. This means that less time and resources need to be spent on developing academic and interpersonal skills. Representatives of the upstream agencies (as well as some representatives of the cognate/referring agencies) recognize that this may make the Youth Business Centre graduates more employable - and sooner. The job-specific skills and training acquired at the Youth Business Centre, as noted previously, are also seen as assets when looking for employment (as reported by participants, work experience hosts, and community agency representatives).

Issue 8: Is the Selection Process Effective in Identifying Successful Candidates?

CONCLUSION

Data from all sources collectively suggest that selection process is a factor in the identifying successful candidates, "successful" both in terms of completing training, as well as going on to obtain and maintain employment in areas for which participants have been trained.

ISSUE FOCUS

The process of identifying successful candidates must be addressed in the context of the applicants that apply, the Centre staff's ability to screen applicants, the business community's positive attitude toward the Youth Business Centre, and to a degree, the Centre's relationship with other community agencies. This combination results in the success of the Program as measured by the number of participants who complete training and maintain/obtain employment in the area in which they received training. In this regard, looking at the "selection process" as a factor in identifying successful candidates extends beyond simply focusing on the Intake/Screening Process. Rather, this process should also be looked at within the context of the Centre's relationship with the business and social services communities.

FINDINGS

Do More Participants Complete This Program Than Other Similar Training Programs? Do More Participants Obtain/Maintain Employment Than Other Similar Training Programs?

Information revealed from other training programs does not indicate any clear differences in the success rate of Youth Business Centre participants, both in regard to completing training and obtaining/maintaining employment. Agency representatives surveyed indicated their participants have a comparable rate of completing their respective programs (85 - 90%). The number of Program participants who obtain/maintain employment following completion of training programs is dependent on the overall objectives of the respective programs. Downstream agencies state that their programs are adjusted to meet current and local job expectations and demands. One upstream agency reported that 80% of the graduates of that particular program obtain employment immediately.

Other programs have not defined "success" by the number of participants who obtain employment following Program completion, but by participants showing a noted ability to make independent choices including seeking employment or going on to further training.

What Criteria Contribute to the Selection of Successful Candidates?

Employers and representatives from referring and upstream agencies (downstream agencies were to be less familiar with the Youth Business Centre) reported that they believed Youth Business Centre participants to generally be more mature, stable and functioning at a higher academic level than participants from other training programs. Participants were defined as needing to be extremely motivated and committed. Although perhaps having some personal and family difficulties, Youth Business Centre participants were seen as needing to have the internal resources and the supports necessary to adjust their lives accordingly in order to complete the demands of the course.

Centre staff were seen as by employers and participants as not only being effective in selecting candidates for the Program, but being able to effectively match participants to work placements.

Issue 9: Does the Program's Relationship With Other Agencies Increase its Effectiveness in Assisting Participants Obtain and Maintain Employment?

CONCLUSION

A survey of 6 cognate agencies (and 3 upstream agencies that may make referrals) provides preliminary indications that the Program has an extremely positive relationship with some of those local agencies or programs. Of this small sample, some agencies are not as fully aware of the programs that the Centre offers. This may result in these agencies not referring individuals or referring candidates who are not suitable to the Program.

ISSUE FOCUS

Like the Centre's relationship with the business community, relationship with referring agencies has developed over time. Those agencies with which the Centre has collaborated with positively on behalf of shared clients are more likely to have ongoing direct contact with the Centre. This contact results in positive working relationships being established, increased knowledge of the Centre and its admission arteria, and increased referrals.

FINDINGS

What is the Referral Relationship With Other Agencies?

A survey of 6 cognate/referring agencies and 3 upstream agencies that may make referrals indicates that among this small sample there are several different ways that an individual might be referred to the Youth Business Centre. Some agency representatives who described themselves as having a positive working relationship with the Centre, have worked with the Centre to develop programs for specific target groups, for example, recent immigrants or single parent social allowance recipients. As well as collaborating with the Centre around a program for a specific group, these agency representatives may also refer candidates on an individual basis. Those agencies who have had previous contact with the Centre, especially around developing programs for specific target groups are more likely to initiate personal contact when referring an individual. Other agencies, whose direct contact with the Youth Business Centre and its staff are less likely to refer individual to the Centre, and are also less likely to be familiar with criteria for admission into the Youth Business Centre.

Among the small group of surveyed community agencies, there are clearly different levels of understanding regarding the Youth Business Centre, the programs it offers, and what criteria a person must possess to be eligible for the Centre's program. For example, while

one referring agency representative stated it is important that a person is highly motivated and "functioning at a good interpersonal level," another referring agency representative stated that she would refer individuals who are lacking in interpersonal/social skills. The process of screening and assessing applicants is one that consumes a lot of time and resources (reportedly there are 5 applicants for every acceptance). A clearer understanding of the qualifications for entry into a Youth Business Centre program might eliminate some of this backlog.

Based on this small sample surveyed, the indication is that the referral process followed by community agencies is related to the nature of the relationship that agency has with the Centre, as well as characteristics of the clients to whom those referring agencies might be providing service. Several representatives from "upstream agencies," those agencies providing programs that can be defined as more "basic" than those of the Youth Business Centre stated that the number of referrals they might also make are also based on:

1) the academic and social functioning level of an individual, and his/her ability to commit to a Program;

2) a client's vocational interests - whether he/she is interested in acquiring job-specific skills or in pursuing more general academic/vocational interests; and

3) the availability of a current program - the Youth Business Centre operates only two programs annually. For those who are on a fixed income, and considered "employable" the long waiting period before acceptance can be a problem.

Again, these suggestions and results are based on a small sample size. It needs to be acknowledged that comments were made by agencies which were admittedly not that familiar with the Centre. Although a small number of agencies was surveyed, this lack of awareness is perhaps as significant, if not more significant, than the comments themselves.

5.
CONCLUSION

In October, 1990 an evaluation was conducted of the Youth Business Learning and Development Centre, in Winnipeg. In conducting this evaluation the following gathering data using a variety of different methods. Specifically these were:

- interviews with Program staff;
- a review of the 300 of the Program's files and the Program's data base;
- a telephone survey of 89 past Program participants;
- interviews with 14 work experience hosts;
- interviews with 6 cognate/referring agency representatives;
- interviews with 3 "upstream" and 3 "downstream" agencies; and
- in-depth interviews with 20 past Program participants.

Following is a summary of the evaluation findings, based on analysis of the data obtained from the above sources.

The Youth Business Learning and Development Centre provides specific target groups including social allowance recipients, single parents, recent immigrants, members of visible minority groups and persons of aboriginal descent with:

1) Academic upgrading;
2) Specific clerical-related skills and training; and
3) work experience in which participants can practice the knowledge, skills and training acquired.

These three key components of the Program are seen as placing the Youth Business Centre participant in a good position to obtain and maintain employment in a related field upon completing the Program.

Those Youth Business Centre participants who have a previous work history, as well as those who have not worked prior to attending the Centre have identified employment in clerical areas as "better" and "more attractive" employment. Participants recognize that there will always be a demand for such positions, the salary and working conditions are seen as assets, and there are more opportunities for advancement than in other types of jobs held. Parents in the program, especially single parent women see clerical positions as providing

more opportunity to effectively manage parental and work responsibilities.

Participants who have received training at the Centre have been quite successful in being hired for such clerical positions. Of the participants surveyed, 66% were currently employed in clerical related positions, and an additional 12% had occupied such positions but were currently not working. In this regard, the Youth Business Centre has significantly assisted participants in obtaining and maintaining employment in attractive better positions. Several less recent graduates of the Centre have made considerable advancements in the clerical/office field, with 19 participants surveyed reporting career movement with salary increases ranging from 25 cents to $9.60 an hour. In case studies, several participants also discussed career advances in relationship to increased responsibilities they held within their offices. Two-thirds of participants surveyed reported enroling in job-related courses. This was assessed to be more an indication of their interest in their jobs and a desire to succeed and advance, than an inability to perform tasks assigned.

There is considerable evidence that indicates that participants' dependencies on partial or full income assistance was reduced as a result of the Program. Less participants are receiving less income assistance: In the telephone survey, 84% of participants reported feeling better off financially now than in the 6 months before the Program. As well the number of participants who were dependent on partial or full income assistance before and after the Program decreased from 53 to 27. As noted above, some of those participants who have worked for a number of years have reported significant increases in income, gains that reflect more than cost of living increases. Overall, participants feel much better off financially, after than before. This general feeling of being better off financially has been assessed by the evaluators as being a reflection of improved financial circumstances, the jobs currently being held, as well as positive feelings about the Youth Business Centre.

As participants are able to obtain employment immediately after completion of training, and are more likely to stay in positions obtained, in the long-term the Youth Business Centre training program should be seen as cost-effective.

In regard to the actual training program, participants rated the three components of the program - Academic Upgrading, Classroom Instruction related to Office/Clerical Positions and Work Experience Placements as the most helpful. (On a scale of 1 to 5, the above components were rated 4.55, 4.56, and 4.45, respectively). Other aspects of the training were not seen as unhelpful. Rather the higher rating given the above three components seems to be an indication of the enthusiasm and sense of urgency participants possessed regarding learning as much as possible as quickly as possible. Participants who used staff for extra help, counselling and support found them most helpful. Participants often spoke of knowing "staff were

always available." Staff were seen as approachable, committed and concerned by participants who had completed training in different years and programs, as well as by employers and community agency representatives.

There is some indication that those participants who entered the program at a higher academic level may have felt "held back" at times. Some participants who identified themselves as being immigrants commented that at times, those classes related to mathematical, technical aspects proceed at a slower pace than they would have preferred. Lacking in confidence regarding their abilities to speak and/or write English, some stated they would have preferred more time spent on that subject. It is however important to note that the above comments are based on a small sub-sample of respondents, and, those who made the above comments were overall positive about the Youth Business Centre program and staff.
Those Centre participants who write their G.E.D. high school equivalency immediately upon completing training at the Centre are most likely to attain a high school standing, the mean difference between point of completing the Program and attaining a G.E.D. standing being .23 months. Participants who write the exam but do not attain a high school standing are unlikely to try again. Case studies clearly indicate that attaining a Grade 12 standing is a factor in enhancing participants' self-esteem.

The Youth Business Centre's relationship with the business community is seen as positive, in and of itself, but also in relation to its increasing the Program's effectiveness in assisting participants in obtaining and maintaining employment. With the combination of skill and training acquired, participants are very likely to obtain and maintain employment in the clerical field. A significant number of participants surveyed reported obtaining their first jobs after completing training as a result of their work experience placement (n = 13) or as a "lead" obtained from the Centre (n = 36) regarding a vacancy in the office of a work experience host or other employer with whom the Centre has a relationship.

As well, the Youth Business Centre has positive relationships with several community agencies. The Centre has worked in close collaboration with the agencies both in developing and implementing programs for specific target groups, and when referring specific individuals. Other surveyed agencies in the community are not as aware of the Youth Business Centre. These agencies are less likely to have personal contact with the Centre. They are less likely to refer clients to the Program, and when this is done those persons referred are more likely not to be "ready" for the training program. These findings are based on a small sample size.

The Youth Business Centre is seen by work experience hosts and the community agencies surveyed as having a good ability to identify successful candidates for its programs. In the business community Youth Business Centre participants are seen as motivated and committed, mature and generally

very willing to learn. Referring agencies perceive Youth Business Centre participants as functioning at a higher academic and emotional level than those training programs being offered by other referring or upstream agencies. The number of individuals referred to the Youth Business Centre training programs from such agencies is to a great extent, dependent on individuals demonstrating the above characteristics and how soon the next training program begins.

In summary, the Youth Business Centre training programs are seen as being instrumental in assisting social allowance recipients, and those with other primary sources of income in obtaining and maintaining employment in office/clerical positions. Participants report being less dependent on income assistance specifically, and "financially better off" generally, after Program participation. The number of participants obtaining employment after the Program indicates that in the long-term the Youth Business Centre is cost-effective.

Educare, the fee-for-service division of the Centre, is expected to play an increasingly significant role in offsetting the cost of the Centre's programs for employment disadvantaged. The programs components rated highest by participants were the three components of the Program - Academic Upgrading, Classroom Instruction related to Office/Clerical Positions, and Work Experience Placements. The Centre's relationship with the business community is a positive one, and is seen as a positive factor in participants obtaining and maintaining employment. The Centre, also, has a good working relationships with several cognate/referring agencies. Other agencies who have less direct contact with the Centre are not as familiar with the Centre, and are less likely to refer candidates to the Program. In regard to candidates to the Program, the Centre has demonstrated an ability to successfully select candidates who will complete training, and obtain employment in an area related to training received.

6.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study the evaluators make three recommendations:

- **The Youth Business Learning and Development Centre should continue to develop programs for its designated target groups. These training programs should continue to recognize the special difficulties these population groups have when seeking employment, as well as acknowledging the skills and attributes individuals in these groups possess on entering the Program.**

It was beyond the resources and scope of this study to focus fully and individually, on the specific population groups targeted as "employment disadvantaged" by the Youth Business Centre. However data from several of the sources used in this study suggests that participants in the some of the designated target groups - specifically recent immigrants and the physically disadvantaged - may have achieved a higher academic standing than the general population of participants in the Youth Business Centre training programs. Centre data indicates that almost 26% of the members of those Centre's programs that are designated for special target groups have a Grade 12 standing. In the case of recent immigrants, this high school standing was achieved in a foreign country, and most often, is not honoured in Canada. Some immigrants felt that some classes could be more geared to their particular academic ability. For example, three participants who identified themselves as recent immigrants stated that they "needed less Math and more English." They felt that they personally needed less assistance in mathematics-related courses and more assistance in learning the English language. Two work experience hosts also suggested that although not recognized in Canada, the academic standings achieved by recent immigrants in their countries of origin, did possibly place those participants at an advantage in the office workplace.

It should be emphasized that it was beyond the resources of this evaluation to look closely at all the specific Centre's target groups. This recommendation then is based on extra information obtained in the course of the evaluation. It is also important to emphasize that the majority of immigrants surveyed spoke most positively of the Youth Business Centre, its staff, and the opportunity provided to obtain employment.

- **The Youth Business Learning and Development Centre should increase its contact and outreach to those agencies that serve potential Youth Business Centre students, but who are currently not making referrals.**

The number of representatives interviewed from social service agencies and other employment training programs is relatively small (6 referring agencies, 3 upstream and three downstream agencies). While recognizing this, there is some indication, based on these interviews that specific agencies have a much greater familiarity with the Youth Business Centre and its programs, than others.

This suggestion is substantiated somewhat by the survey results that show that only 21.6% of Program participants first heard about the Youth Business Centre through an employment/social service counsellor or social worker. Given the positive impact Program participation has on students completing training, the Centre should consider further increasing its visibility among community agencies, especially among those agencies providing service to Centre target populations, but presently not making referrals.

- **The Youth Business Learning and Development Centre should continue its efforts on maintaining a balance between SARS referrals who may or may not have previous histories of employment, and other target population groups.**

As discussed in this evaluation report, 87.6% (n = 78) of Youth Business Centre participants have a previous employment history, 59.8% (n = 52) have been employed in the year that they were accepted for training at the Youth Business Centre. There are clear reasons why Youth Business Centre participants have not maintained employment in jobs obtained prior to training. These include:

- poor salaries;
- lack of security;
- limited room for advancement; and
- poor working conditions, which includes the inability to effectively manage work responsibilities with those of being a parent, especially a single parent to young children.

The type of employment obtained following training is seen to eliminate some of the above barriers, and believed to be, in the long-term, more steady, regular and attractive employment. While recognizing these facts, continued attempts should be made to accept SARS candidates with less recent work histories. Qualitative data obtained from the case studies suggests that the Youth Business Centre is successful with this population group.

APPENDIX 1

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES OF THE YOUTH BUSINESS CENTRE

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

This activity is made up of two elements:

- Intake; and
- Inter-Agency Planning.

The activity of Intake actually begins when the Centre conducts orientation sessions every Monday. Present at these sessions are candidates who have heard of the program through another agency or by "word of mouth." Issues discussed at the orientations are admissions criteria, the admissions interviewing process, responsibilities of students accepted into the program and details of the program. In attempt to reach possible candidates who have not heard of the program through other contacts, the Centre publishes a notice in a local newspaper every six months. Those persons reached by this means are oriented just before the recruitment process begins in January and August.

Applicants meeting the eligibility criteria are given one or two follow-up appointments in the recruitment period. Staff do not adhere to a set questionnaire when students are interviewed for admission. Candidates are assessed regarding their commitment and motivation. As well a standardized test is administered to determine a student's level of understanding, and his or her ability to maintain pace with program material. Frequently applicants who are not suited to the program are referred elsewhere. This referral process is not a formal one, rather "unsuccessful applicants" are given names and information on specific agencies and encouraged to initiate contact with those services on their own.

Government-funding bodies or private agencies often ask the Centre to consider submitting a proposal for a training program for a specific target group (for example, immigrant women or a physically handicapped group). In such cases, the Centre submits proposals and, eventually implements programs for particular target groups in consultation with community agencies working with those target group. The programs then reflect the experiences and needs of those groups. Inter-agency planning is an important component of such programs.

Staff at the Centre report that after 15 years of operation there is very little, if any need for them to engage in active outreach in order to recruit candidates for their programs. The Centre training programs are well-known in the community and there is no longer concern regarding training positions being vacant. Staff report that for every candidate accepted, five apply.

In-Class Instruction (Academic Upgrading)

Students receive upgrading in all subjects specific to the provincial Department of Education's high school equivalency exams. These are:

- Mathematics;
- Science;
- Social Studies; and
- Reading and Writing Skills.

Students usually first attempt to write this exam shortly after completing training at the Centre. Students are asked to submit the Centre's address as the "mailing address" when writing the exam. In this way the Centre is able to keep track of students' performances.

In-Class Instruction (Job-Specific Clerical Training and Skills Development)

Students take courses in Business Mathematics and Business English to give them a good understanding of, and an ability to communicate in the "language" that is spoken and written in a typical business office. Students also receive specific training in typing, accounting, and computer operation (word processing, spreadsheet and data management). Resume preparation, job search and interview skills are also taught and practised.

No class time focuses specifically on life skills/social skills training. Although such training and self-esteem building exercises were incorporated into the training a number of years ago, the Centre now is committed to the belief that students have excellent opportunity to learn these skills through the social and work situations that they encounter in their training. Similarly as students achieve success in class or work

placements, their self-esteem will be enhanced and they will be encouraged to accept other challenges.

Placement and Monitoring

In regard to work placements, the Youth Business Centre is now in the position where it has more potential work placements available than it has students to fill them. "New" employers, ie) those who have previously not had students from the Centre placed with them, usually phone the Centre to inquire about work placements rather than the Centre initiating contact with them. Consequently in regard to work placements, the Director of Administration can direct much of her attention to matching students interest and goals with an appropriate work placement rather than on recruiting new employers.

Students have two work experience placements. The first is three weeks in duration and begins after six weeks of class activity. The second placement is four weeks long and begins in the sixteenth week of the program. The timing of the first placement allows students to test out their original goals and adjust them if necessary. At the point of their second work placement students are expected to have acquired the necessary skills for working in an office setting. Employers at the selected work sites are not expected to conduct any training. Rather their responsibilities are to support, monitor and evaluate the student's performance.

Prior to the actual placements beginning, students initiate a "pre-employment interview" with the employer in whose office they will be working to confirm the placement is acceptable to both parties. Two days into the placement the student's instr ctor initiates contact with the employer. Following this it is expected that there will ɔe weekly discussions of attendance (monitored and recorded on a daily basis) performance duties, and general impressions. In the final week of the work placement a formal evaluation involving the student, teacher and employer occurs. Evaluation forms are standardized and kept on file. Although open lines of communication are encouraged throughout this process, the onus is on teachers to initiate contact with employers, and for students to initiate contact with their teachers (at times that do not interfere with their work assignments).

Reporting and Data Collection

The Youth Business Centre has implemented a computerized follow-up system through which information on all students participating in the program is maintained. This system contains personal information, as well as entrance, exit and employment data on students. Staff report that they have not developed a systematic way of initiating contact with students who have graduated from training programs at the

Centre to determine those students' current employment status. Participants may contact they have obtained employment - or if they have not. Employers who have had a student placed with them on work experience may contact the Centre's Director of Administration if an opening comes up within their company. Contact in turn, is initiated with students whose status is unknown to determine whether they are interested and able to apply for the vacant position. Follow-up information on all students is not available.

Educare (Fee-for-Service)

Educare is that division of the Centre mandated to develop and provide fee-for service computer software training courses. Under Educare the Centre designs programs for specific groups (for example, personnel in an office, or in a particular government department might want to upgrade their computer skills). Educare has also provided night school classes for the general public when enough individuals have expressed an interest. Courses are taught by both teachers employed at the Centre and in the community. Initially teachers at the Centre will be approached to determine if their schedules can accommodate an Educare class. If none of the teachers at the Centre are available instructors in the community will be approached. When designing Educare courses, every attempt is made to ensure that students are provided with both relevant theory, as well as equal opportunity to put that theory into practice. Instructors are chosen for their ability to communicate to students in a language that is understood, as well as for their technical knowledge. Courses are designed to suit the needs of the specific students in the class.

Surplus revenues generated by Educare are transferred to other programs in the Centre. Also Educare revenue allows the Centre to purchase equipment not covered under normal funding arrangements. For example the Centre recently purchased a Fax machine with excess funds from Educare. The plan is that ultimately Educare serve the role of "parent program" and support all other programs provided by the Youth Business Centre. The staff at the Centre admittedly state that at present Educare programs are designed and implemented when the Centre is approached by groups with specific requests. It is expected that in the future the Youth Business Centre will adopt a more pro-active marketing strategy, one that reflects a well-studied, researched understanding of local and provincial employment re-training and upgrading needs.

APPENDIX 2

HUMAN RESOURCES OF THE YOUTH BUSINESS CENTRE

HUMAN RESOURCES OF THE YOUTH BUSINESS CENTRE

The **Executive Director** is responsible to the Board of Directors of the Youth Business Learning and Development Centre Inc., and as such assumes responsibility for the overall operation of the Centre. The key functions are:

1) Establishing and maintaining an appropriate structure for the management of the Centre.

2) Hiring and supervising of staff; evaluating staff performance.

3) Overseeing of all financial operations, including paying of salaries,submitting, negotiating and administrating of proposals and contracts, and maintaining of financial records.

4) Conferring with funders, the Manitoba Dept. of Education and the Board of Directors regarding all aspects of the programs being implemented, and insuring that the standards and policies established by these bodies are being met.

5) Overseeing the acquisition of new work placements and Educare contracts.

There is no specific training or formal education that staff see as a pre-requisite for the above position. It is acknowledged that a background in Business and/or Economics, and an understanding of the principles of Adult Education and Marketing are helpful, if not compulsory to performing the responsibilities required of the Executive Director of the Youth Business Centre.

The **Director of Administration** assists the Executive Director in his responsibilities and in particular has responsibilities for administrative matters related to all employees. The key functions are:

1) Designing of teachers' schedules; insuring workloads are equitably distributed.

2) Developing, implementing and evaluating all aspects of work placements.

3) Coordinating of fee-for-service programs.

4) Screening/assessing candidates seeking for the Centre's training programs.

Good administrative skills, an ability to network, and formal training and experience in the area of teaching are seen as pre-requisites for the above position.

The responsibilities of a **teacher** at the Centre are:

1) Screening/assessing candidates seeking admission into training programs.

2) Designing, implementing and evaluating assigned teaching programs.

3) Supporting, counselling and referring assigned students with difficulties to other counselling services as required.

4) Participating in the evaluation of assigned students' work performances.

5) Maintaining accurate records showing progressive status of students.

In order to teach at the Youth Business Centre, individuals must, in fact, be certified teachers. It is also preferable that teachers will possess a certain amount of life experience and maturity. These characteristics, it is expected will give them a greater ability to relate to, and assist employment disadvantaged adults in coping with their life situations. Teachers at the Centre are also expected to be innovative, knowledgeable in regard to changing teaching methods and academic expectations, particularly as they apply to the job market, and, to be prepared to adapt their class programs to fit the above demands.

APPENDIX 3

SAMPLE OF THE DATA BASE OF THE YOUTH BUSINESS CENTRE

YOUTH BUSINESS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE INC.

JOB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PROGRAM # 25 MAR 87 / SEPT 87

CLERICAL

TRAINEE	PERSONAL DATA		TRAINEE PROFILE		EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS
	ABORIGINAL:	No	Graduated		
	S.A.R.:	No	ENTRYGRADE:	9	
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2X 0S1	MARITAL STATUS:	Single	G.E.D. LEVEL:	12	
	DEPENDENTS:	1	TYPING SPEED:	28	
	VISIBLE MINORITY:	No	WORD PROCESSING:	Satisfactory	
BIRTHDATE:	HANDICAPPED:	No	HN SCORE:	0	
UPDATE:	IMMIGRANT:	No			
	ABORIGINAL:	No	Graduated		
	S.A.R.:	No	ENTRYGRADE:	9	
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3L 2B5	MARITAL STATUS:	Married	G.E.D. LEVEL:	12	Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 1L6
TELEPHONE:	DEPENDENTS:	1	TYPING SPEED:	49	
	VISIBLE MINORITY:	No	WORD PROCESSING:	Satisfactory	Secretary $ 17,500/yr
BIRTHDATE:	HANDICAPPED:	No	HN SCORE:	77	Sept 14, 1987
UPDATE:	IMMIGRANT:	No			Referral
	ABORIGINAL:	No	Graduated		
	S.A.R.:	Yes	ENTRYGRADE:	10	
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2P 0M2	MARITAL STATUS:	Single	G.E.D. LEVEL:	12	Winnipeg, Manitoba
TELEPHONE:	DEPENDENTS:	2	TYPING SPEED:	62	
S.I.N.:	VISIBLE MINORITY:	No	WORD PROCESSING:	Satisfactory	Invoice Clerk/$1200/mth
BIRTHDATE:	HANDICAPPED:	No	HN SCORE:	79	March 1989
UPDATE: May 1990	IMMIGRANT:	No			Newspaper Ad.
	ABORIGINAL:	No	Withdrew		
	S.A.R.:	No	ENTRYGRADE:	10	
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2K 1Z2	MARITAL STATUS:	Single	G.E.D. LEVEL:	No Standing	
TELEPHONE:	DEPENDENTS:	0	TYPING SPEED:	0	
S.I.N.:	VISIBLE MINORITY:	No	WORD PROCESSING:	N/A	
BIRTHDATE:	HANDICAPPED:	No	HN SCORE:	81	
UPDATE:	IMMIGRANT:	No			
	ABORIGINAL:	No	Graduated		
	S.A.R.:	Yes	ENTRYGRADE:	9	
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2J 0Z1	MARITAL STATUS:	Married	G.E.D. LEVEL:	11	Winnipeg, Manitoba R2H 0B2
TELEPHONE:	DEPENDENTS:	1	TYPING SPEED:	41	
S.I.N.:	VISIBLE MINORITY:	No	WORD PROCESSING:	Satisfactory	Secretary/$950.00/mo.
BIRTHDATE:	HANDICAPPED:	No	HN SCORE:	64	Mar 7, 1988
UPDATE:	IMMIGRANT:	No			Newspaper Ad.
	ABORIGINAL:	No	Graduated		
	S.A.R.:	Yes	ENTRYGRADE:	10	
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3L 0A4	MARITAL STATUS:	Single	G.E.D. LEVEL:	12	Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3H1
TELEPHONE:	DEPENDENTS:	1	TYPING SPEED:	0	
S.I.N.:	VISIBLE MINORITY:	No	WORD PROCESSING:	Satisfactory	Inventory Clerk $ 6.38/hr
BIRTHDATE:	HANDICAPPED:	No	HN SCORE:	87	Aug 24, 1987
UPDATE:	IMMIGRANT:	No			Work Ex.